

## Writing Sample

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Module 5, Course 1 Final Exam

Topic: I am brought into a sluggish division of five employees. Company leadership wants me to develop a more “intrapreneural” mindset among these five. Include the initial discourse as I attempt to create a changed divisional culture, my vision for the work unit and my basic philosophy of management, and my action steps to accommodate change.

## OPENING COMMENTS

I was brought into the situation as an agent of change, so hopefully support for a cultural change will be there from the start, and there from the top management. Luckily for me, this time I only have to deal with five individuals. I will work with them first as individuals, then as a group that doesn't include me, then as a team that does include me, and then finally as a team as it exists within the overall organization.

These five individuals might or might not have entrepreneurial tendencies which might be the root cause of the sluggish performance. I will have to "audit" the department and assess the individuals to see what turns them on, so that we can tap into that and go onward and upward, or make changes.

## INITIAL DISCOURSE AS I ATTEMPT TO CREATE A CHANGED DIVISIONAL CULTURE

I will start the process with a fairly casual group meeting and tell them that I have been put here to allow each of them to be more intrapreneurial, that we want to balance their freedom to explore opportunities against the discipline of the marketplace, that we want to promote more personal freedom, and give them more space to work on ideas that they are passionate about, all in the context of improving the individual's situation in concert with the company achieving its goals. I will tell them why I am excited to do so, and why I think and hope it will excite them. I will outline the plan to speak with them as individuals to get to know them personally with a frank, open, and honest discussion, and that we'll meet again as a group.

As I work with them individually, I will have a conversation with each person to find out who he is, what motivates him personally, why is he at this company, how long has he been at the company, where did he work previously, what did he study in school and why. I will know this from studying the resumes and personnel files, but I want to hear it from him.

I will ask him about his current projects, what he thinks about them and what he feels about them. I will ask him about his personal goals and motivations, and I will then ask him if his position is taking him one step closer to or one step further away from his career and personal goals, or if he is just standing still, and then ask why. In this conversation, I will tell him why I am here, what motivates me personally and professionally. My goal for this first phase is to break down the walls and connect with him personally. Basically, I want to find out if he should or should not be a part of this team. I only want to keep him on the team if his heart is in the right place. I will give him my commitment to his professional and personal development.

I will then ask him who his clients are, and why they are our clients. I will ask him what he knows about our clients' goals and if we are helping our clients to take one step closer to or one step away from their goals, or if they are just standing still, and then ask him why. We will talk about our competition. I will then move into a conversation about the division and corporate goals and ask him to connect the individual, client, division, and corporate goals together. If we have a good match, all will sing in harmony.

I will be upfront and tell him that the general consensus is that our division has been limping along and tie that into the aforementioned quest for a more intrapreneurial

culture. I will then ask him for an honest assessment of why the division has been limping along. I will ask directly why has the progress been slow. I will ask if he feels that he had been personally held back, if he feels there were any specific obstacles to his success as a person or as a team. I will empathize with him because I have been in that type of environment before. I will ask his assessment if five is the right number for the division, or if it is too high or too low. I will also ask him if he had made any suggestions in the past, what were they, and what was the outcome, if any. I will encourage openness, and assure confidentiality.

After completing the individual sessions, I will bring them all back together. By this time, we will all have a pretty good understanding of who we are and where we are. These five work for the organization because someone before me determined that they had the tools and hired them. The worst case scenario is that a pattern developed where these five were brought in and left to fend on their own, and were left to operate with little support or continuing training, and within an environment that made them play by the rules and stifled their intrapreneurial spirits.

During this group session, we will strengthen the desire of an improved intrapreneurial culture and emphasize that by doing so we will harmonize individual, divisional, and corporate goals. In this meeting, I will open the floor for any comments that are suitable for team consumption, and will offer a team-suitable summary and leave out anything personal. By this time, I hope to have developed trust and openness, and laid the foundation for a new phase of team formation.

#### VISION FOR THE WORK UNIT AND BASIC PHILOSOPHY OF MANAGEMENT:

I want each member, including myself, to run at full potential, to experience what that feels like, and to let us all revel in that wonder. We will continually encourage and allow our team members to respond completely and immediately to our clients. The closer we are to the customer, the better we will understand their needs. Each team member will receive encouragement and operate in a flexible environment. I'm not into chair warming or keeping appearances because I know that individuals have widely different work styles. I only like results, and I believe in the numbers game in that you need possibly 20 activities for 1 success. I also believe in using the right number of people and the right tools for any given problem. By this, I mean that 6 members, including myself will bring great depth and creativity to problem solving.

#### ACTION STEPS TO ACCOMMODATE CHANGE

- 1) First, I will involve the five in designing and presenting to management a business plan for providing the funding and tools necessary to excel in this position.
- 2) Now that I know these people, I will be able to design an effective incentive structure that will induce them to put forth the desired level of effort. While being fair across the board, the incentive program will tap into each individual's stated goals, the client involvement, and the corporate mandates.

- 3) As a team, I will attempt to strike a balance between coaching, mentoring, teamwork, and independence. Open communication and feedback will be anticipated rather than feared. Mistakes will be encouraged and tolerated, and some will even be laughed at.
- 4) Each individual will have the opportunity to work on mastery through continuous professional development.
- 5) Throughout it all, we will bring the customers into the process as appropriate.
- 6) As a creative person myself, I will tell these people that I understand that the creative process is interrupted with real life, or better yet, is part of life. As such, if the desired results are produced, no questions will be asked by me as to how they are using their time.
- 7) Each team member will be encouraged to employ what I call a balanced approach to professional development and client service. His time will be a balance of talking with clients about their future plans, working with the clients about the current needs, periodically assessing their professional toolkit, professional training, various forms of giving and receiving feedback, and spending time on personal projects.
- 8) I will also develop a profile for future team members to be used as we either expand or replace members of the team. I will also involve the team with the hiring process.

These steps will help these five people and myself form into a team that knows its role in the organization, and that fulfilling that role will only come about from the harmonization of furthering the progress of the organization and meeting the individual's personal and professional needs.

We will find out what drives these people, and develop a work environment that will allow the individual to work at his own creative pace, and reward him for his creative output with something meaningful to him.