



Reading through the course outline of my management paper and the GeeBiz instructions online, a seed of nervous apprehension took root. The task seemed huge. I am fairly certain I didn't fully comprehend what the competition entailed. But it was only March 7th and Time kindly provided me a false sense of comfort.

"Don't worry," Time whispered, "Future Sophie will deal with this." I clicked the final submit button.

The journals gave me heart, as they all demonstrated similar doubts and concerns that I myself was experiencing. I too worried about being a competent leader, how my team-members were going to perform and whether events in their part of the world would impact on their participation. Though I had no experience with working in a virtual team, I had previously worked in a multicultural team, and had experience with assembling a business proposal. I thought this would stand me in good stead. Unfortunately, the experiences I had prior to competition were about as much use to me as a simile from another culture. But I again took strength from the fact that other leaders had struggled initially and then blossomed as the competition progressed.

Mid competition, GeeBiz was really starting to test my enthusiasm. Late nights, stress from sacrificing crucial study time to organise Skype meetings that only ever seemed to include half the team at one time...I resented GeeBiz. Ideas weren't flowing and two team-members, after making initial contact, didn't really have much to do with the brainstorming process. This would later have repercussions for one team member, as it became difficult to include them as the team developed. Their irregular contact and lack of explanations meant that they were constantly on the outside of the group. Sadly, this would not change, and a difficult decision was made to remove their name from the report.

A turning point came when one of the two absent team-members came onto the scene with an idea. The team took to it and fleshed it out. I got excited. The team was finally coming together and it was good to see that people were eager to participate; they just needed a spark. This wasn't to last. Regrettably, it became apparent that the idea wasn't going to be profitable, a criterion that we all found troublesome to satisfy in any of our ideas. Back to square one.

May 20th and I am seriously considering the legitimacy of some of the previous journals. This competition was exhausting. You don't just dabble in the competition - it consumes you. Your every thought, your every action is dictated by the parameters of GeeBiz. I am sure my neighbours heard me sleep-talking about the benefits of using Municipal Solid Waste.

This competition was definitely character building. Whilst I had some dark thoughts about GeeBiz, I know that I will continue to reap from the experiences I have gained from this competition in the future. Calvin above effectively summarises my sentiments about this competition. I had to learn to put aside my tiredness, my frustrations and put on a fresh face voice when I Skyped my team-members. I learned that my leadership style is one of walking alongside my team, rather than out front. I gained an insight as to how people around my age live; in completely different worlds. What average 21 year old in New Zealand would think of rallying, let alone attending, a *national* protest against their government? Or regularly face issues with unnotified power outages? Some of us New Zealanders consider 9am lectures a major drama. The acquaintance with another culture really does change the lens with which you view the world. And unfortunately, to be cliché, you do gain increased confidence in your ability to lead and get things done. I mean, how could you not? It's not every day an undergraduate university student coordinates seven other international people and navigates the associated challenges and difficulties and still manage to come out in one piece. You may be thrown in the deep end, but it's up to you whether you sink or swim.

22nd May, 12:55am. Business proposal is complete and the ending feels rather anti-climatic. All this time spent organising, editing, researching, talking...and it all just sort of ends.

I would like to thank my team-members, Rob, Casper, Mystellain, Summer, Menique and Andrea for your contributions, it was wonderful to work with you. To the organisers and the judges of this competition, thank you for providing us with this opportunity.