

MEMO

To: Prof. Jim Henry

From: Megan DuVall and Dustin Smith

Date: December 13, 2004

Re: Group Performance Evaluation

Initial Project:

We wanted to work with an environmental organization to utilize our passion and concern for the environment. Our initial project plan was composing a brochure about wetlands and one of the DEQ's technical programs. In the beginning, we thought the project was going to be focused on educating the general public on wetlands and why they are important. However, by the end of semester, our project became about educating the general public primarily on the DEQ's Virginia Water Protection Program (a.k.a. wetland program) and wetland information became secondary.

Project Evolution:

We began communication with the DEQ towards the end of October. Due to loaded schedules in October, work on the project was slightly delayed. By the first of November they had sent us two or three possible project ideas they wanted completed. We decided on a brochure describing their wetland protection program. The first half of November was spent familiarizing ourselves with wetlands and the wetland program.

The middle of November was spent organizing the information we had compiled. After comparing and contrasting numerous sample brochures we determined the most effective design and decided on our brochure's layout. We also started breaking down our information into sections. The sections were chosen after we decided on the most important wetland information and program information.

Towards the end of November we had composed a rough draft of our brochure. Our information was divided and placed in the order of sections we had decided on. We sent the draft to DEQ and waited for revisions. They promptly responded with a lot of helpful suggestions which gave us further structure and an even clearer idea of what they were looking for.

Our project was completed by the second week of December. Finalizations included test runs, questioning all information included, and ending with the most ideal and user friendly layout.

Work Summary:

The amount of work that needed to be completed was evenly distributed between the two of us. Dustin focused on wetland information and Megan dealt with the wetland program information. And where Megan worked on editing and information layout, Dustin was in charge of brochure design. Below is a summary of the work involved and a projected number of combined hours spent in each category.

Group Meetings: 20+ hours; We met regularly each week, not including class times. Meetings were at least twice a week on varying days. We discussed research developments, looked over each other's work progress, provided suggestions and helpful criticism. The length of meeting times increased as the project deadline grew closer. Then time was spent figuring out brochure software and fine tuning information and final design of the brochure.

DEQ Meetings: 2 ½ hours; Due to the DEQ's location in Richmond, we were able to meet with them only two times. Dustin was present for the first meeting and Megan was present for the second one. The meetings consisted of exchanging ideas and views of what either party's vision of the brochure would be, and then reaching a compromise. Additional communication with the DEQ was by phone or email.

Research: 25+ hours; This section was the second most time consuming for both of us. The DEQ did not have a substantial amount of information explaining wetlands, therefore outside research was required. While the DEQ website contained all of the necessary information on the wetlands program, the language used was difficult to follow as well as disorganized.

Power Point Presentation: 6 hours; By this point, we had all of our information. The time and work put into the power point presentation consisted of layout, determining order of information, and overall effectiveness.

Brochure Design: 35+ hours; Brochure design was definitely the most time consuming of all of the project components. It included the actual composition of all information as well as designing the brochure's layout. The fact that neither of us was familiar with the software required extra hours becoming comfortable with the technology. We also experienced difficulty with the large amount of information we ended up with. Our extensive data required software that enabled us to create something larger than a simple three fold brochure.

Cancelled/Additional Meetings: When we set up our projected times to meet throughout the semester, we originally decided on Tuesday and Sunday evenings. However, our meeting times became more flexible as the semester went on and were scheduled at the beginning of each week. Only one meeting was cancelled throughout the semester.

Late Deliverables: None

Absences from Meetings: None

Exemplary Work: We were each able to contribute our own valuable assets to the project. Megan contributed strength in writing and editing to the project. Dustin

supplied an eye for design and aesthetic appeal. Our different assets complemented each other very well and resulted in a successful and positive team work experience.

Project Accomplishments:

The most successful aspect of our project was the teamwork. Not only was this project stressful at times, there were more than enough opportunities for us to butt heads on. However, we handled each fork in the road with maturity and good communication. We established from the very beginning we would be flexible and open to criticism. The positive work relationship we were able to have made the project run smoother and more efficiently than it would have otherwise. While compromise was key to our project, neither of us gave more or took more than the other.

Main Setback:

The biggest problem with the brochure was having too much control. Our supervisors provided us with no guidelines, standards, or stipulations on what they wanted. We were given an enormous amount of information and they left it up to our judgment to decide what was important and what wasn't. Even after we submitted a rough draft to our supervisor, we received only editing suggestions. And when we contacted them asking for their opinion on information or sections we wanted to include, their lack of knowledge on the wetland program prevented them from having much of an opinion. In the future, such a problem can be eliminated by talking with individuals directly involved with our subject and sharing ideas as to what is important and what is not.

Additional Setbacks:

Minor issues included conflicting schedules, different desires for the project's purpose (from both our side and our supervisors), and limited technology knowledge. All of these slight setbacks were dealt with by increased communication and devoted time. The deadline's fast approach allowed for little buildup of the problems and required that they be addressed and dealt with as soon as possible.

Individual Contributions:

From the beginning, we were able to evenly distribute responsibilities and tasks among both group members. Dustin was in charge of wetland research as well as brochure layout. He was able to bring previous experience with aesthetics and photography that proved valuable. Dustin also contributed a lot of outside time designing the brochure and learning how to operate the software we used. Megan dealt with the main composition of the brochure, devoting much of her time to writing and editing. In addition, she spent time deciphering the permit program's complex language. During the final stages of the brochure, we both dedicated many hours to making sure it reflected our individual visions yet combined them into one fluid and successful outcome.