***Prompt 1***

***Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes, or contributed to group efforts over time.***

“Why isn't he done with the design…?” Stanley sighed.

We were called for a meeting thinking it was a normal work check up but I was shocked to hear the lack of progress that we’ve made. The lack of communication made us think that everyone was fine. The room was filled with aggression and utter chaos as we accused each other of not working hard enough. I experienced my first taste working inside a company which was not full of fun and games.

My main task was to work with 3 other interns to produce a marketing and budgeting plan for the company to attract customers. I was excited knowing how I could potentially contribute to the company’s revenue growth. So, I pushed my colleagues to get things done ASAP no matter the deadline and use the remaining time to go the extra mile. However, I was met with resistance by the others’ “If things ain't broke, don’t fix it” attitude.

After a few weeks of continuous resistance and sensitivity whenever ‘deadline’ was mentioned, I began to doubt myself. I started to find ways to adapt without compromising my principles.  I came up with the idea of holding a team dinner every time we successfully submitted our project as a sense of accomplishment. Then I suggested a system where the individual who finishes their work first doesn’t need to chip in for the dinner to further appreciate their hard work. Although they were skeptical, who doesn't want free food. This became our incentive to finish early, which slowly improved our chemistry and helped our team stay on track.

During my second month, things turned for the better. I’ve learned my colleagues’ pace and strengths. We began finishing tasks more efficiently: we consistently finished our tasks a few days in advance. However, much like how the Titanic got blindsided by an iceberg, our “interns” ship encountered our iceberg: A deadline typo from 11 to 21.

It was the 8th, but we were calm and collected thanks to the team dinners. We adjusted our timeline to meet the original deadline (the 11th) as I delegated our tasks: I worked on marketing ideas, Stanley calculated the budget, Patricia communicated with the internal team, and James helped design the proposal. As I negotiated our deadline to our supervisor with a trembling heart, we were able to extend the deadline to the 15th. A couple of all-nighters later, we finished the task by the 13th.

We did miss our original deadline, but I was proud to see our development from a dishevelled team of interns into a solid team unfazed by adversities. I learned the importance of keeping a good relationship inside the team for us to work more efficiently. Instead of constant debates, our team now relies on effective communication whenever something is ambiguous and reminding each other about the upcoming deadline. I realized being a leader is not just ordering people on what to do but as a leader we need to have the ability to positively influence our team through examples and positive reinforcements. This understanding will help me reach my entrepreneurial goal as I would keep in my mind to be the best version of myself and maintain constant communication inside the workspace.

Dear Axell,

What a great internship experience! The reader can definitely see how your leadership experience positively influenced your team. Aside from the word limit, you have conveyed your story in a way that showcases relevance to the prompt.

In terms of the word limit, the essay is meant to be very concise and straightforward. This means that structuring the essay intentionally by outlining is key to a great essay. In addition, going back to your outline from time to time as you are writing your essay may be helpful to you (and consequently, your reader). Read over every paragraph to ensure they convey exactly what you intend to, and then read over the whole essay to see whether the flow ties the essay together to answer the prompt.

It would be helpful to read through your essay while putting yourself in the shoes of your reader to better convey your essay straightforwardly.

It’s also good to take breaks and revisit the draft a few times to make sure the flow of the essay is appealing to a reader. Breaks are also nice to freshen up your eyes and mind!

All the best!

Thalia