The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?

Saved 17:18. I just finished finalizing all the documents for the upcoming event. I smiled as this is finally the last event I will lead as the student council president for the academic year 2020-2021. Just as I was closing my laptop, my phone rang and a text message came from one of the judges for the cooking competition of the end-of-year event I organized: “Cat, I need to talk to you about the rubrics and concept of this competition. Can we call at 19:00?” Then, my smile drained, and my heart started beating out of my chest.

3 months before the event, I’ve dedicated my time into organizing my end-of-year event and ensuring that every single detail is planned out. By then, I knew that I would be moving to a different school; hence, I wanted the event to be memorable for both teachers and students. A day before the event, a problem occurred. I had to come up with a plan that aligns with how the teachers envisioned the competition and it led me to understand the importance of persevering through challenges and difficulties when it’s least expected.

Reflecting back, I realized I wasn’t an exemplar leader because I didn’t always involve all my members in the event planning. Could the problem be prevented if the work was delegated to some of my members? This thought constantly runs in my mind. It was my mistake to not trust my members even when I knew they have the capabilities to help. It was my problem and I have to improve on. As I learned to be more confident, it compelled me to run for president in my new school and prove to myself that I can improve my leadership skills for the better.

I had another opportunity to lead a fundraising event , Walkathon, which successfully collected a total of $9,200 for the Hoshizora foundation. Walkathon is a fundraising event that gathers donations from participants (students /teachers /staff) encouraging their family and friends to pledge a fixed amount of money for each kilometer the student walk. **After 2 weeks, we collected the donations** based on the pledge agreement and the donation was able to help 8 underprivileged children receive access to proper education this year.

Starting from the beginning, I made sure that I wanted to organize the event differently than what I did before. **I began with distributing the tasks based on the willingness and skill set of each member,** **especially coordinating them to ensure that each task was explained thoroughly.** I also paid extra attention to the teachers and head of school’s opinions towards the event proposal to avoid any kind of miscommunication by consulting with them every time there is progress or changes on the proposal and planning.

The 2 weeks of promoting the event was a hassle and full of trial and errors as we continuously improvised on our strategy to encourage students and teachers to participate. At the beginning, we distributed the digital posters through our school communication platform, but there weren’t as many participants interested in joining as we initially expected. Then after countless back-to-back meetings, we decided to create an innovative promotional video that explains the primary purpose of our cause and the entire process rundown of Walkathon. I believe that the promotional video was a key point in encouraging people to join because there is a clear purpose stated as part of our cause for Walkathon. Slowly, more people started pledging and within 2 weeks, we had around 100 participants joining.

The role and support of each of the member contributed to the productivity and success of the event with an effective work distribution and no last-minute changes like the End-of-Year event. I also felt that it empowered my members to acquire new skills like operating how to use Mail Merge, a function in Microsoft Word that automatically creates personalized documents for each recipient from a specific data source (Microsoft Excel) as this handy feature had saved me and my members a ton of time and effort of retyping receipts and certificates over and over.

I could see a greater efficiency as none of my members were left out which was a huge improvement from how I used to lead in my previous school. Therefore, an important lesson that I learned is that everything takes experience and it includes learning to become a leader who respects, listens, delegates, and communicates with their members well.

Dear Catherine,

Great leadership experience! It seems like there were many lessons you learned and many things you want to convey, which is terrific.

However, to clearly communicate what you learned to the reader, it may be helpful to outline your essay with careful reference to the prompt.

You might consider focusing on what the exact obstacles were, the lesson you learned, and how you applied what you learned to lead you to later success. Technical details are important, however too much detail may shift the reader’s attention to the story instead of learning your lesson which is the answer to the prompt.

All the best!

Thalia

ALL-in Essay Editor