Co-Op Assessment 2:
Anticipated Learning Outcomes

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Cutting Edge

Company Profile

Cutting Edge is a post production and media house situated in West End. **Cutting Edge** produces high quality work in a number of fields such as television and film production and post production with departments branching out into online games, mobile development, DVD authoring and web design and development. Cutting Edge specializes in TV commercials with an impressive portfolio of car ads with stunning visual effects. With fully equipped sound studios and video editing suites and a power house of visual effects creatives, Cutting Edge houses one of the best environments to work in. The "Edge" is responsible also for a number of TV shows and sporting events with a knack for reality TV, engineering Big Brother, Australian Idol, I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here, and many other popular local and international series.

Digital Department

I work in the recently-renamed-to Digital department (previously New Media). My department focuses on smaller TV commercials, After Effects, Final Cut Pro, Flash, mobile content, interactive CD-ROMs and web development. Projects I have specifically worked on include client projects using PHP and internal projects such as a RFID-based sign-in system in C#, an Intranet in Ruby on Rails, a centralized user management web service based on an Active Directory back-end, and a showreel site for Cutting Edge employees to personally demo the projects they have worked on (for example: www.ceshowreel.com.au/scottharris).

My Role

My role is officially **Information Systems Developer**. Officially, this role entails developing anything that might be needed either in-house or by a client in a variety of languages. As Cutting Edge is not an IT or software company, the majority of my projects I work on alone, occasionally consulting designers for some interface suggestions. For example, other than the front-end design, I brought the entirety of several client projects to fruition, including ACE (www.agedcareeducation.com.au), a system for nurses to take online tests and receive certificates based on their skills in caring for aged people. Again, because I am the only one dealing with these particular types of projects, I am responsible for all steps of the development life cycle: planning, system design, database design, coding, testing, deployment, and documentation.

Graduate Capabilities

Knowledge and Skills

I consider my knowledge and skills in this particular area to be my strong point. What I lack in organizational skills or business sense, I make up in confidence in my abilities and a continued interest to learn and curiosity to expand on my technical skill set. Furthermore, having come up against the particular challenges presented to me in this position, I have realized my own passion for a particular subset of software development. That passion being Enterprise Integration. This has pushed me to extend my knowledge and skills in a particular direction, namely integrating with common corporate systems such as Active Directory and proprietary software often employed by digitally-based businesses. I see myself becoming an expert in this field and developing company-wide systems to aide and enhance current and future business processes

Effective Communication

A strong hold of language, both spoken and written, is undoubtedly an essential skill. It is an obvious necessity in any work place and yet somehow greatly overlooked or ignored by the majority of people aiming to better themselves as an employee.

Bodaniel Jeanes

My position exposes to me to a vast selection of opportunities to put these skills to test and expand on them. For example, monthly we have WIP (**W**ork **I**n **P**rogress) meetings to discuss the current jobs, their schedules and invoices, and our progress on them. Furthermore, I have client meetings on a regular basis, sometimes several times a fortnight, in which an extra level of eloquence and communication is expected and essential. Lastly, email is a vital component to modern businesses, and Cutting Edge is no different. Emails are a minutely thing in my workflow, with emails being sent both to clients with carefully worded queries and to other employees with proposals, and it is essential to be able to communicate concisely and accurately in this manner.

Working Independently and Collaboratively

As I mentioned earlier, plenty of my projects that I work on, I am the sole contributor to the product. This holds extremely true for internal projects such as our sign-in system or intranet. This allows me to see both my own strengths and shortcomings and presents me with the frustration of not having someone with whom to bounce ideas around and the opportunity to overcome it. However, when it comes to client projects, these are mostly team-based. Someone will be handling quotes and client communications, while someone else does designs, someone else renders video for web content, and I'll develop the back-end according to specs we all fleshed out with the client in initial meetings.

Learning Objectives

My learning objectives primarily focus on what I see as my personal shortcomings in the business place. Forth-most, I recognize my lack of effective organizational skills. I need to really work on establishing a solid workflow and system for filing things, be it an idea, a client job, or my pay slips. In addition, I need to manage my time better, with an emphasis on suitably prioritizing tasks for optimal productivity.

My second and more desirable learning objective is to gain a clear understanding of common and effective business procedures and policies. I plan to own my own business one day, and having a proper understanding of how a successful one works in the real world will be invaluable to me.

Gauging Success

The mentioned learning objectives and graduate capabilities all cover topics regularly discussed between my supervisor and myself. These goals were actually realized and set out when I took this position months before co-op was even brought to my attention so processes to gauge my development are already in place. One of these processes is the annual employee review which will be coming around at the right time to evaluate progress in accordance with the goals of the co-operative program.