**OG – 13 Page 805 : The first topic –SAMPLE ESSAY**

The executive in his argument concludes that by donating a portion of the proceeds from the use of The Easy Credit Company’s credit cards to a well-known environmental organization in exchange for the use of the environmental organization’s logo on The Easy Credit Company’s credit cards will attract new customers, increase use among existing customers, and enable them to charge higher interest rates. However, the executive’s argument is flawed because it is unreasonable to assume that the printing of the environmental organization’s logo on credit cards is the only reason that can increase the company’s revenue, and it is perverse to state that the recent poll is a good representation of the entire population.

The primary concern of people when they are looking for credit cards is generally, interest rates offered to them. If The Easy Credit company were to charge higher rates one credit cards it would not only reduce the use of the cards by current cardholder but also make The Easy Credit company’s card unattractive to potential new customers. This is because the clients would give priority to lower interest rates as opposed the affiliation with the environmental organization.

Moreover, the executive is naive to assume that the poll that states that people are becoming increasingly aware of environmental issues is a good representation of the general population. The poll firstly was conducted to evaluate people’s interest in the environment not whether they will be willing to pay higher interest rates on their credit cards in if their credit card company’s donates to the organization. Also, the sample of size of the poll is also a restriction. It is not clear as to how large or what groups of people were polled. Therefore to conclude on the basis of this poll would be preposterous.

The executive should have stated that in order to attract new customers and increase the use of the credit cards of existing customers interest rates should be lowered. He or She should have done an analysis on whether the increase in the usage of the volume of the cards by lowering rates would increase profitability or now. Once he or she reaches that conclusion then it would wise to make a decision accordingly. Furthermore the executive should conducted a poll of random audience and poll for whether people are willing to get a credit card that is affiliated with a environmental organization.

The executive’s argument is flawed because it unreasonable to assume that by printing the environmental organization’s logo on credit cards is the only reason that can increase the company’s revenue, and it is perverse to state that the recent poll is a good representation of the entire population.

Answers to the Real Essay Questions

Analysis of Argument

#1 #2 #3 #4 #5 #6 #7 #8 #9 #10

These essays are not "perfect" answers, but represent what could be done in a 30 minute time

period to get a score of 5 or 6.

**Analysis of Argument # 1: Olympia Foods**

The author argues, using facts from the color-film processing industry's downward trend in

cost over 24 years, that Olympic Foods will be able to cut costs and thus maximize profits in the

future. The author bases his conclusion on the generalization that organizations learn to reduce

costs over time and, since Olympic Foods has 25 years experience in the food processing industry,

its costs should have declined considerably. There are two serious flaws in the argument.

First, the argument uses a faulty analogy between the color-film processing industry and the

food processing industry. Analogies drawn between the two fields are highly suspect because there are many serious differences. While the film processing industry faces a relatively simply

processing challenge, food producers must contend with contamination, transportation and farm

production (much more serious challenges). Thus, it is likely much more difficult to wring

efficiency improvements in the food industry.

Second, the author uses a sweeping generalization. the author's prediction of margin

improvements relies on the optimistic assumption that Olympic Foods' 25 years of experience will

automatically result in operational efficiencies. The problem with this is that improvements in

processes do not occur automatically over time, they require tremendous effort at continuous

improvement and they require potential room for improvement. It is possible Olympic Food has

limited room for improvement or lacks the managerial will to improve its operations. Thus, there

is no guarantee of improved operational efficiency over time.

The author's argument has two seriously flawed assumptions. The author could strengthen his

conclusion by providing examples of how the company has learned how to improve its operations

over 25 years and implemented those changes.

**Analysis of Argument # 2: Centralization of Sales**

The argument concludes that the Apogee Company should shut down its field offices and

use a centralized location because the company was more profitable when it had a single central

location. The argument has two serious flaws.

First, the author commits the "After This, Therefore, Because of This" fallacy where the

author assumes that because a decline in profitability occurred after the field offices were created,

the field offices were responsible for the decline. However, there may be other factors that could

have caused the decline. Could a industry-wide decline, poor management, or poor marketing

have caused the decline? There are many factors that could have caused or contributed to the

decline. Without ruling out other factors or presenting stronger evidence, the author cannot

conclusively blame the field offices.

Second, the author assumes that eliminating the field offices would improve profitability by

streamlining the management of employees and cutting costs. There is no evidence to support this

assumption. Perhaps the field offices cut travel costs from the central office and allowed better

management of sales to far-flung clients. The author could support his assumption with cost cutting and or profit-enhancing strategies.

In summary, to strengthen the conclusion that Apogee should close field offices and

centralize, this author must rule out factors other than decentralization that might be affecting

current profits negatively and demonstrate how decentralization would cut costs.

**Analysis of Argument # 3 : Funding of Arts**

The author concludes in this argument that the city should shift some of its arts funding to

public television for two reasons. The author argues that public television is being threatened by

severe cuts in corporate funding and attendance at the city's art museum has increased

proportionately with increases in visual-arts program viewing on public television. There are a few problems with this argument.

First, the argument assumes that a correlation proves causality. Simply because there was an

increase in television exposure to the visual arts, mainly public television, has caused a similar

increase in local art museum attendance. The author uses the statistical relationship between

increased art museum attendance and similar increases in television viewing of visual arts

programs to establish causality. However, a statistical correlation does not mean causality, there

may be other factors driving the increased art museum attendance, such as new shows, a new wing

added to the museum, or possibly interest in art has risen overall in society.

On the other hand, the author makes a fair assumption that television programs impact

behavior. This is a common sense assumption, after all, advertisers spend billions of dollars on

television ad time because they trust this assumption as well.

In conclusion, the author's reasoning is somewhat persuasive. The author could strengthen his

argument by eliminating other potential causes to increase in visits to the local art museum.

**Analysis of Argument # 4: Declining Revenues and Delays**

The report recommends replacing the manager of the purchasing department in response to a

relationship between falling revenues and delays in manufacturing. The grounds for this action are

that the delays are traced to poor planning in purchasing metals and cause of the poor planning

might be the purchasing manager's lack of knowledge of the properties of metals. The author

suggests that the position of purchasing manager should be filled by a scientist from the research

division and that the current purchasing manager should be reassigned to the sales department.

The report supports this latter recommendation pointing out that the purchasing manager's

background in general business, psychology, and sociology equip him for this new assignment.

The report's recommendations have two serious questionable assumptions.

The first problem is that the report fails to establish a causal connection between the falling

revenues of the company and the delays in manufacturing. The fact that falling revenues coincide

with delays in manufacturing does not necessarily prove that the delays caused the decline in

revenue. The report's recommendations are not worthy of consideration if there is no compelling

evidence to support the causal connection between these two events.

Second, the report assumes that knowledge of the properties of metals is necessary for

planning in purchasing metals. No evidence is stated in the report to support this crucial

assumption. Moreover, it is not obvious that such knowledge would be required to perform this

task because planning is essentially a logistical function.

The author could strengthen argument that the manager of the purchasing department be

replaced by demonstrating that the falling revenues were a result of the delays in manufacturing.

Additionally, the author would have to show that knowledge of the properties of metals would

improve planning the purchasing of metals.

**Analysis of Argument # 5: Increasing Circulation**

The publisher of the Mercury newspaper is suggesting that its price be reduced below the

price of The Bugle, a competing newspaper. The circulation of the Mercury has declined during

the 5-year period following The Bugle's introduction. The publisher believes that lowering the

price of The Mercury will increase its readership, thereby increasing profits because a wider

readership attracts more advertisers. The publisher's reasoning has two serious problems.

First, although it is obvious that increased circulation would make the paper more attractive

to potential advertisers, it is not clear that lowering the subscription price is the most effective way

to gain new readers. The publisher assumes that price is the only factor that caused the decline in

readership. There is no evidence given to support this claim. In addition, given that The Mercury

was the established local paper, it is doubtful that the large-scale subscription dropping of its

readers would be explained by subscription price alone.

It is possible that there are other reasons for The Mercury's decline in readership. The Bugle

could have much better writing and layout than the Mercury. Or, readers may not be satisfied with

the news reporting's accuracy, or the balance of local to national/statewide news coverage. Either

way, it is unclear that lowering prices will drive up readership.

In conclusion, this argument depends on a simplified assumption about the price of the paper

and its popularity. The author could strengthen the argument by discussing other factors beyond

cost before concluding that lowering subscription prices will increase circulation and, thereby,

increase advertising revenues.

**Analysis of Argument # 6: City of Helios**

This advertisement for the city of Helios makes several arguments for locating companies in

Helios. The advertisement states that Helios is an industrial center and enjoys a lower than

average unemployment rate. In addition, the advertisement states that the city is "attempting" to

expand its base by attracting companies that focus on technologies. This argument is problematic

for three reasons. Moreover, it is argued, efforts are currently underway to expand the economic

base of the city by attracting companies that focus on research and development of innovative

technologies. This argument is problematic for several reasons.

First, the argument presents no reason to believe that the city is equipped to handle nonmanufacturing related businesses. The status of the city as a manufacturing center will likely mean that the it is equipped to handle manufacturing businesses. Its labor supply, energy resources, regulatory environment, support businesses, and infrastructure are likely well suited to

manufacturing companies. However, there is no reason to believe, based on the argument that

Helios offers any attractive benefits to technology companies.

In addition, since the city lacks any specific benefit to technology companies, the use of the

statement "Helios is attempting its economic base" is a non sequitur in the context of the overall

argument. The statement offers no benefit to technology companies to move there other than an

expressed interest in attracting those companies. This argument could be strengthened if they

actually provided real benefits to technology companies.

Another ineffective argument made is the city's low employment rate. The low

unemployment rate during a recession suggests that the city has a labor shortage. This means that

companies moving to the city will have to probably pay above average labor rates to attract labor

in a tight market.

The advertisement for the city of Helios fails to provide any compelling reason for nonmanufacturing businesses in Helios. The low unemployment rate actually suggests that the city is a poor place to locate a business. Based on the advertisement, the only companies that could

plausibly benefit from the city are manufacturing companies.

**Analysis of Argument # 7: Aspartame or Sugar**

The author in this argument is trying to establish that people are better off trying to lose

weight with sugar rather than the artificial sweetener aspartame. This conclusion is based on the

assertion that aspartame can indirectly cause weight gain by triggering food cravings, while sugar

benefits weight loss by enhancing the body's ability to burn fat actually enhances the body's ability

to burn fat. The details of the claim however, prevent making an effective generalization about

Aspartame's weight-loss benefits.

The argument states that "high" dosages are required to deplete the brain chemicals

responsible for registering a sense of being sated, or full. The problems is that a "high" dosage is

not defined. Is this high dosage reached during normal consumption? Without the dosage defined,

it is impossible to determine how often or how significant of a side effect the food craving is.

The second statement, that sugar burns fat, also is qualified and not universally applicable. In

this instance, the benefits of sugar only arise after at least 45 minutes of continuous exercise.

However, it is a fair assumption that many exercisers will not actually exercise for 45 minutes.

Thus, the author cannot make the generalization that all exercisers should prefer Aspartame over

sugar after exercise.

In conclusion, each of the studies cited in the argument cannot be extended to make a

generalization that Aspartame is preferable to sugar. Instead, the exercise claim must be qualified

by "after 45 minutes" and the dosage indicated by "high" must be defined.

**Analysis of Argument # 8: Worker interest**

This argument uses a survey of workers to show that workers are indeed interested in

management issues. The argument is solely based on a survey of 1200 workers that showed that

79% of the workers surveyed expressed interest in the topics of corporate restructuring and the

redesign of worker benefits. This argument has several flaws.

The first objection to this argument is the validity of the survey. The statement is incomplete

because it does not adequately describe the conditions of the survey. One issue is the sample. Were the workers chosen for the survey chosen randomly or did they volunteer for the survey? This question is relevant here since apathetic workers would obviously not respond to a survey of

worker apathy!

In addition, are the 1200 people used in the survey representative of the company's

employees and an adequate sample size. Perhaps the 1200 workers are part of a major company

with several hundred thousand employees. Or, the workers surveyed may not be representative of

the company at large. For example, what if they were part of a management trainee program for

workers who wanted to move into management positions?

Aside from any issues relating to the quality of the survey, the argument makes a false

generalization about the results of the survey. The survey asks specifically about the worker's

interest in corporate restructuring and redesign of benefits programs. These issues could be

reasonably construed as worker's issues since they would directly impact worker benefits and job

security (restructuring often implies layoffs). Thus, the survey cannot be extended to demonstrate

an interest in management issues.

In sum, the conclusion about worker interest in management issues cannot be reasonably

drawn from the survey's information. The survey's accuracy is not adequately explained and the

surveys results are illogically extended to draw an unsupported generalization.

**Analysis of Argument # 9: Consumer demographics**

The author argues that department store sales will increase significantly over the next few

years because their core market of middle aged people will increase in size over the next decade.

The author uses the statistic that 39 percent of the retail expenditures of middle-aged people are

through department stores. The author additionally argues that stores should take advantage of this

trend by carrying more products aimed at middle-aged customers. This argument has two serious

flaws.

The argument falsely assumes that an increase in middle-aged people will automatically

translate into an increase in sales. The argument errs because it does not acknowledge that the

younger generation consists of a different population cohort, which may not favor department

stores. Indeed, this generation may favor stores such as the GAP, that became prominent in the

1980's. Thus, the younger generation's preference for non-department store retailers may be a

generational phenomenon rather than an age-related issue.

The argument further suggests that department store's inventories should be changed to

reflect the tastes of middle-aged Americans. This is problematic because the younger population,

although preferring non-department stores, may be growing at a faster rate than the middle-aged

Americans and therefore represents a more attractive market. In addition, it is possible, as stated in

the prior paragraph, that the younger generation's tastes have indeed changed and that when they

age they will not shop at department stores.

In sum, this argument is not strong as it currently stands. The argument needs more

information about the growth rates of the younger market and their tastes.

**Analysis of Argument # 10: Funding cuts**

The argument states that the state legislature does not have to consider the views of

protesting students. The author supports this conclusion by pointing out that only 200 of the

12,000 students actually went to the state capitol to protest the cuts in college programs. The other

concludes that since an overwhelming majority of the students did not take part in the survey, they

must not be interested in the issue. This argument has two serious flaws.

The author attempts to make a statistical inference from the fact that only 200 out of 12,000

showed up for the rally. This is not a valid statistical survey. If, for example, the students had been

randomly surveyed to get a fair sample of the overall population, this would have been a valid

survey.

Second, the author uses the fact 12,000 students stayed on campus or left for winter break to

show that they were not concerned about education cuts. In fact, if the protest was during winter

break, it suggests a large level of inconvenience for the students to protest the cuts (since many

could return home to distant locations). A low turnout does not suggest a low level of interest, but

instead implies a high level of organizational opposition since students could be recruited during

their vacation time.

As it stands the argument is not well reasoned. To make it logically acceptable, the author

would have to demonstrate that the protesting students had some characteristic in common that

biases their views, thereby nullifying their protest as representative of the entire college.