



Teaching Conference for  
Management Educators

**OBTC 2015 at LaVerne University**  
**June 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

**SUBMISSION GUIDANCE**

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*\*Please include ALL supplementary text at the end of this document\* \*Only  
one document should be submitted\**

## **Submission Template for the 2015 OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators**

### **1) Title of Proposal:**

“History is Boring!” Changing this perception through the use of social media.

### **2) Abstract:**

*Please include a brief session description (not to exceed 100 words). If your proposal is accepted, this description will be printed in the conference program.*

This session features an innovative way of teaching history by giving students an opportunity to analyze a historical labor or management event. By imagining if the key stakeholders had access to social media during the time of their chosen historical event, students develop a deeper understanding of the event’s impact and relationship to current practices. Evidence from post-assignment surveys supports this learning outcome. Participants will develop their own take on a historical event using a social media tool (e.g., Facebook) or by generating a meme. Please bring a laptop or mobile device to participate in this experiential exercise.

### **3) Keywords:**

*Labor History, Management History, Social Media, Student Engagement*

### **4) Format**

- Activity or exercise
- Discussion roundtable (60 minute only)
- General discussion session

### **5) Time Requested:**

- 30 Minutes
- 60 Minutes (*Roundtables must select 60 minutes*)
- 90 Minutes

### **6) Planning Details:**

*Does your session have any special requirements for space or materials?*

Those who sign up for our session will be asked to bring their laptop or mobile device to the session. We would appreciate having access to smart classroom technology and web access to share attendees’ social media efforts.

## **7) Learning Objectives or Goals for the Session:**

The purpose of this session is two fold. First, we aim to introduce an innovative way for instructors to approach a topic, which students typically perceive as boring and tedious, in a way that helps students reach a deeper level of learning about a historical event. Secondly, we will create an opportunity for attendees to develop their own social media response to a given historical event.

## **8) Management or Teaching Topics:**

One of the challenges in management education is to teach material from a historical perspective. In our experience, students perceive history as boring, tedious, and lacking in relevance. Part of this misperception may come from the way history is often taught using lectures or textbooks whereby students typically memorize and regurgitate material (Gerjets and Hesse, 2004).

We felt there had to be a better way of bringing history to life for the students. Therefore, our goal was to engage the students and get them to understand that labor history is about those who were impacted by that particular event and the implications on practices today. In essence, we wanted the students to have a deeper understanding of what life was like during that era and how the perceptions of the various stakeholders shaped that particular labor event.

While brainstorming about different potential approaches to teaching labor history (and other courses where a historical perspective may be helpful), we began to discuss how social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Memes, and text-to-video vehicles such as Goanimate.com) are ubiquitous for not only the Millennial generation, but also Generation X and Baby Boomers (Gerard, 2011; Mazman, and Usluel, 2010; McHaney, 2011; Stratton, Clayton, Abdel Samad, and Julien, 2014; Stratton and Julien, 2014; Tapscott, 1999; 2009; Vermunt, 2013).

Consequently, we gave the students an assignment where they were tasked to select a labor history event. Instead of memorizing dates or writing a summary of that labor history event, the students would imagine that the key stakeholders involved in that event had access to today's social media. For example, if the student selected New

York’s Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (1911) as their incident<sup>1</sup>, they could script an imagined interaction on Facebook between the various stakeholders such as the women who escaped the fire, the families of those who perished, the factory owners, the supervisors, the fire crews, and bystanders.

In doing so, we seek to achieve the following student learning objective:

1. **Create a social media sample that demonstrates a deep understanding of a given labor or management history event.** *Do they understand the event and the short- and long-term implications of this event? How does this event impact our current labor relations/human resource management climate and practices?*

In order for the students to achieve this objective, they had to connect the labor history event with what they wrote for their creative social media interaction. In addition to developing this social media piece, they wrote a brief reflection paper to explain that they understood the facts of the event as well as the short and long-term implications of this labor history event. Results of the post-exercise evaluation suggested that deeper learning did take place and the students had a richer understanding of the impact of the labor history event on the different stakeholders.

## 9) Session Description and Plan:

*What will you actually do in this session? Include a timeline for your session.*

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Introduce the session by providing examples of some of the social media student creations along with evidence of learning.	10 minutes
Brainstorm potential use of social media platforms for other courses where a historical perspective is helpful.	15 minutes
Interactive opportunity for session attendees to select a labor history event and create their own social media sample. Presenters will display some examples of the attendees’ work.	30 minutes
Wrap-up and conclusion; share a teaching note for this assignment.	5 minutes
<b>Total</b>	<b>60 minutes</b>

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<sup>1</sup> The Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire (1911) resulted in the deaths of 145 men and women. This fire was a catalyst for unionization of the garment workers as well as the establishment of labor and fire regulations in the workplace.

## 10) For Activities and Exercises:

Below is an excerpt from one of the course outlines that provided an example of what was required of the students in a labor relations course. One week of this course focused on labor history and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (PBS) documentary was shown in class. A more detailed teaching note will be provided to session participants.

### Example Assignment:

Labor history is more than just a collection of dates, facts and figures. It was men and women fighting for the very characteristics of the workplace that many of today's workers take for granted: paid leave, a five day work week, potential legal representation of a union, and pensions.

You will be responsible for bringing labor history to life using social media. This assignment is worth a maximum of 10 marks. This assignment must be done individually.

You will choose a pivotal event in either Canadian or American labor history. Some options are:

- Toronto's Typesetter's (Printer's) Strike (1872)
- Chicago's Haymarket riots (1886)
- Winnipeg General Strike (1919)
- New York's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911)
- Windsor's Ford Strike (1945)
- Oshawa's General Motors Strike (1937 or 1984)

Once you have selected your labor history event and conducted some preliminary research, you will create an interaction between some of the key stakeholders involved in the incident. You will imagine how the interaction would have unfolded if today's social media had been available during the time of your historical incident. For example, you may choose 'Fakebook' (Fakebook.com allows users to create a fictional social media profile), Twitter, Goanimate.com, Instagram or a meme generator for this assignment. After you have created your social media interaction, your paper should provide a brief summary of the actual historical event, the key stakeholders and the impact of the event on labor history.

## **11) Implications for Teaching or for Teachers:**

We incorporated this assignment in two different labor relations courses over the period of two semesters. In total, 30 student respondents (12 male, 18 female, average age of 21 year) completed the post-project evaluation. Using a Likert scale (1=not at all, 5 = exceptional, the majority of respondents felt that: the assignment helped them better understand course concepts (mean = 4.03) and the exercise was creative and fun (mean = 4.03). Furthermore, the majority of students felt that this assignment was more helpful than case studies, lectures or tests in helping them understand and apply key course concepts. These results suggest that our aforementioned learning objective was met. Two strengths of the assignment was: a) the ability of the student to link course theories to the content of their reflection paper b) having the professor share a cross-section of the finished projects with the class.

In conclusion, while this particular assignment was used to bring labor history to life in a labor relations class, we feel that this particular exercise using social media could be useful in other courses where instructors feel that historical perspectives would add value to student understanding of the material (e.g. understanding Taylor, Hawthorne etc. in an organizational behavior class; understanding the Savings & Loan scandals in the 1980s in an ethics class).

## **12) Application to Conference theme:**

How does your session fit with the overall OBTC theme of Learning in Community?

This session fits the theme of learning in community because the student project gave students an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of a labor or management history event and specifically the stakeholders in the community that were impacted by this event. Furthermore, this assignment has the potential for students to share their finished products and receive peer feedback, thus extending the opportunities for students to learn in community.

## **13) Unique Contribution to OBTC:**

*Have you presented the work in this proposal before? If so, how will it be different? Is this proposal under current review somewhere else? If so, please explain. How will your proposal be different for the OBTC conference?*

This work builds on the work of Stratton, Clayton, Abdel Samad, and Julien (2014), Stratton and Julien (2014) and Vermunt (2013) who have explored the potential of social media and internet memes to promote deeper understanding of a variety of

management concepts. The unique contribution of this proposal is the focus on courses where there is a historical component (i.e. labor relations, introduction to management, organizational behavior, ethics). This exercise is designed to help students go beyond rote learning and understand the perspectives of multiple stakeholders and develop a richer understanding of the course material.

#### **14) References and/or Additional Materials:**

- Gerjets, P. H. & Hesse, F.W. (2004). When are powerful learning environments effective? The role of learner activities and of students' conceptions of educational technology. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 41, 445-465.
- Gerard, J.G. (2011). Linking with LinkedIn®: Three exercises that enhance professional social networking and career building. *Journal of Management Education*, 36, 866-897.
- Mazman, S., & Usluel, Y. (2010). Modeling educational usage of Facebook. *Computers and Education*, 55 (2), 444–453.
- McHaney, R. (2011). *The new digital shoreline: How Web 2.0 and Millennials are revolutionizing higher education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Stratton, M. T., Clayton, R., Abdel Samad, M., and Julien, M. (2014) What Do Success Kid, Sheldon Cooper and Bad Luck Brian have in Common? Using Memes in the Classroom to help students apply management concepts. *41<sup>st</sup> Annual OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators*. Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN. Available: <http://obtc.org/conference/index.php/2014/2014/schedConf/presentations>
- Stratton, M. T. and Julien, M. (2014). Xtranormal Learning for Millennials: An Innovative Tool for Group Projects. *Journal of Management Education*, 38:2, 259-281.
- Tapscott, D. (1999). Educating the net generation. *Educational Leadership*, 56 (5), 6-11.
- Tapscott, D. (2009). *Grown up digital: How the net generation is changing your world*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Vermunt, S. (2013). Iron Man, Big Bang, Facebook and Failblog: Using Pop Culture, TV, and Social Media to Teach Intro OB Concepts. Proceedings for the 40th OBTC Teaching Conference for Management Educators. Available: <http://obtc.org/conference/index.php/2013/2013/paper/view/193>

## Additional Materials:

### Sample Teaching Note for Social Media Assignment

Labor history is more than just a collection of dates, facts and figures. It was men and women fighting for the very characteristics of the workplace that many of today's workers take for granted: paid leave, a five day work week, potential legal representation of a union, and pensions.

You will be responsible for bringing labor history to life using social media. This assignment is worth a maximum of 10 marks. This assignment must be done individually.

***The learning brief should be a maximum of 4 pages double-spaced (the page limit includes the cover page) using Word and should be submitted via the assignment function.*** Your learning brief should have a cover page that contains my name, the course code, your name(s), student number(s) and the title of your paper. The file name of your paper should have your full name(s) and student number(s).

You will choose a pivotal event in either Canadian or American labor history. Some options are:

- Toronto's Typesetter's (Printer's) Strike (1872)
- Chicago's Haymarket riots (1886)
- Winnipeg General Strike (1919)
- New York's Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (1911)
- Windsor's Ford Strike (1945)
- Oshawa's General Motors Strike (1937 or 1984)

You can choose another event in labor history, you just need to double check with me first and get my approval. To help get you started, I have provided some suggested websites:

- <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/highlights-in-canadian-labour-history-1.850282>
- <http://www.aflcio.org/About/Our-History/Key-Events-in-Labor-History>
- <http://rabble.ca/news/2013/09/best-defence-good-offence-lessons-canadian-labour-history>
- <http://history1800s.about.com/od/organizedlabor/a/haymarket01.htm>
- <http://www.caw.ca/en/3276.htm>

Once you have selected your labor history event and conducted some preliminary research, you will create an interaction between some of the key stakeholders involved in the incident. You will imagine how the interaction would have unfolded if today's social media had been available



during the time of your historical incident. For example, you may choose “Fakebook”, Twitter, Goanimate.com, Instagram or a meme generator for this assignment.

After you have created your social media interaction, your paper should provide a brief summary of the actual historical event, the key stakeholders and the impact of the event on labor history. As always, it is very important that you proofread your paper before you submit it to me.

***Your learning brief is due via the assignment function (insert date here).*** Late submissions will not be accepted so please plan accordingly. I will be showing a selection of these social media examples in a future class.

### **Social Media Assignment Rubric**

Activity	Mark
Paper was well-written, well organized and free of grammatical errors	/ 5
Paper conveyed a strong understanding of the relevant labor history event and demonstrated creativity in scripting the interactions between the key stakeholders	/ 5
The learning brief is worth 10% of your final grade	/10