**2022 MOBTS PROCEEDINGS**

**Bartering for Community Benefit Project**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this session, I will share with participants the *Bartering for Community Benefit Project*, a student-driven assignment aimed at creating a shared experience for students to become more aware of the role that emotions, learning styles, and other OB/OT course topics play in diverse decision-making environments. The Project begins with each student team acquiring a $1.00 item of their choosing to be used for bartering. Subsequently, the item must be bartered at least five (5) times during the course with individuals outside the classroom. The goal in each barter or exchange transaction is to receive an item of greater value than the one the team currently owns with the final item benefiting a charitable organization of the team’s choosing. Session participants will have the opportunity to experiment with the Project by beginning their bartering strategy for an item that I will provide to each participant team. Participants will receive copies of all related course documents.

**Key words**: Bartering, Community Service, Experiential Exercise

***Introduction****. Provide a brief introduction that establishes a need for this type of exercise and identifies the target usage. Include potential course applications and explain for whom the exercise is designed: early undergraduate, late undergraduate, graduate, etc.; traditional, non-traditional, cross-cultural, etc.).*

In the search for meaningful experiential assignments for students, it is helpful to consider and then adapt relevant concepts and activities from different disciplines. Bartering is a form of negotiation that involves trading goods and/or services without money or credit and its use has increased in the COVID-19 era given the resulting economic slowdown and inflation (Gunia & Lewicki, 2020). The session will be a discussion and application of a bartering exercise with participants that I use with great success in my MBA Organizational Behavior/Organizational Theory course. My University is designated as a Hispanic Serving Institution with a large population of first-generation students. However, the exercise could also be used in an undergraduate management course. The exercise can be used as an assignment in either a traditional on-ground or online course. Some courses in which the exercise could be used include Organizational Behavior, Organizational Theory, and Human Resource Management.

According to Fisher and Ury, “Negotiation is a fact of life (1983, p. xxvii).” However, there is a great need better equip business students with negotiation skills such as conflict resolution and cooperation (Soliman, 2022). The *Bartering for Community Benefit Project* creates a shared experience among student team members. This shared experience serves as the platform for learning and applying negotiation skills as well as other OB and OT topics in order to make the trades necessary and complete the assignment. Because the student teams create their own strategy in this regard, students become personally involved and engaged in the exercise. By selecting an organization to donate the final item to from their trading activity puts a novel twist on this assignment and results in great personal and collective pride emerging among students as shown by student feedback.

***Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications****. Briefly specify the relevant background literature that the exercise is based upon and how your session contributes to effective teaching and learning in the field of management.*

Although bartering is considered an old and inefficient form of trading especially in comparison to using cash or credit (Oliver & Mpinganjira, 2011), a classroom exercise using bartering can be an effective learning tool for students. This session will contribute to management pedagogy/andragogy by applying a bartering exercise used in negotiation courses (Carrell & Manchise, 2011) in a unique way to teach management concepts by actively involving students in their local community.

The theoretical foundation upon which this exercise is based lies in Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Theory. The activity is self-directed in that the student team makes the individual bartering decisions and determines the direction of the project based upon their interests and abilities. Students are given a concrete experience, namely, the challenge of bartering for a community service or good. Then they are required to reflect on each transaction, determine the OT & OB concepts that were involved in each bartering transaction, plan their next steps, and continue experimenting with different bartering approaches, locations, and objectives. This is an iterative process as each student team must make at least five trades over the eight-week session (term).

***Learning Objectives****. Specify the learning objectives for the exercise by articulating the expected changes in knowledge, attitude, or skill that are associated with participation in the activity. What teaching topics are relevant to your session?*

There are four learning objectives for the MBA course that I teach which are addressed with the *Bartering for Community Benefit Project*:

1. Differentiate among learning styles.

* Students will analyze their learning styles and the learning styles of their team members.

1. Distinguish among different organizational decision-making processes.
   * Students will analyze their team’s decision-making processes.
2. Understand the importance of Emotional Intelligence in the workplace.
   * Students will analyze their own and their team member’s Emotional Intelligence.
3. Communicate effectively at the individual and team level.
   * Opportunities to enhance and assess communication skills will be provided within student teams.

Topics within courses in which the exercise could be used are Corporate Social Responsibility, Leadership Development, Change, Managing Ambiguity, Conflict, Effectively Working in Teams, Emotional Intelligence, Learning Styles, Experiential Learning, Collective Bargaining/Labor Relations, and Negotiations.

***Exercise Overview****. Provide an overview of the activity/exercise, including the logistics of running the exercise (e.g. timing, materials, class size), the flow of the exercise, variations or alternate applications, debriefing guidelines (e.g. questions to ask, how students generally respond). The goal is to give the reviewer enough information so that they understand what the activity is that you plan to present in your session.*

At the beginning of the course, in the first class, this assignment is reviewed and discussed with students. Teams of approximately four to six students, for a class size of 20 to 25 students, are formed by the professor through a random selection feature in the learning management software.

To start, each team is to acquire a $1.00 (or less, exclusive of tax, etc.) item of their choosing to be used for bartering. The initial bartering item can be something that a team member already owns or something that they purchase. This item then serves as the starting point for bartering. Subsequently, the item must be bartered at least five (5) times over the eight-week session (term) with individuals outside the classroom. The goal in each barter or exchange transaction is to receive an item of greater value than the one the team currently owns. The final item must benefit a charitable organization of the team’s choosing in some way.

See Appendix A for the assignment instructions, required conditions for trading, and assignment presentation requirements. Also see Appendix B for the grading rubric.

***Session Description.****Provide an overview of what you will actually do in the MOBTS conference session. Include a timeline for the session and how participants will be involved. Remember, reviewers are looking for participant engagement in these sessions.*

The learning objectives for session participants include:

* Understand an experiential exercise that gives students the opportunity to benefit the community of their choosing while learning and applying course concepts.
* Discover through conversation and application how to apply the assignment to a variety of graduate and undergraduate management courses.

There will be four parts to the session:

Part 1 – Ask participants what experiential exercises they use to engage students with their course topics. Ask what types of assignments they use. Explain the use of bartering as an experiential exercise for applying management concepts and practices. Briefly highlight the story of how one individual traded “One Red Paper Clip” for a house which is used as motivation for students (MacDonald, 2007). (10 minutes)

Part 2 – Explain the assignment and share how one MBA student team went beyond the original assignment requirements and transformed it for future courses. Share the project outcomes of some other student teams over the years and student feedback as well as local media coverage that the project received. (15 minutes.)

Part 3 – Engage participants in the exercise by forming teams of four to six participants and distributing an item to each team that I will supply for subsequent bartering exchanges. Teams will then begin to strategize how best to make the trades that will benefit a charitable organization. I will tell participant teams that they may keep the items and encourage them to continue the session exercise and actually make the trades after the session concludes in an attempt to create “sticky learning” (Inglis et al., 2014) or have a lasting impact on participants. (20 minutes)

Part 4 – Debrief the participant exercise with facilitation questions such as:

* What was most challenging?
* Did your teams establish norms?
* What decision making processes did you establish?
* How could bartering for community service could be applied to your courses. (15 minutes.)

**References**

Carrell, M. R., & Manchise, L. J. (2011). Developing bartering skills: Real world exercise for a negotiation course. *Business Education Innovation Journal, 3*(2).

Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1983). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in* (2nd ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

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Inglis, H. J., Dawson, K. L., & Nishioka, R. Y. (2014). *Sticky learning: How neuroscience supports teaching that's remembered*: Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

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MacDonald, K. (2007). *One red paperclip: Or how an ordinary man achieved his dream with the help of a simple office supply*: Three Rivers Press

Oliver, P., & Mpinganjira, M. (2011). Barter trading: An empirical investigation of management practices. *African Journal of Business Management, 5*(31), 12256-12263.

Soliman, C. (2022). Negotiation: Always there and never called by its name - Results from the literature and from empirical experiments. *Arab Journal of Administration, 42*(2), 227-240.

­­**Appendix A (Syllabus Excerpt)**

**Bartering for Community Benefit Project - 25% of final grade - 250 points**

* + Team Presentation

**PLEASE REVIEW THE RUBRIC FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT POSTED ON BLACKBOARD**

***Purpose***

The purpose of this Assignment is to better understand and apply Organizational Theory and Organizational Behavior concepts and practices while benefiting a charitable organization (e.g./community-based, non-profit, club, group, association, etc.) that needs help. Each team is to demonstrate their collective and individual learning about course topics such as learning styles, working in teams, decision making processes, innovation and creativity, emotions, and individual motivation and change by participating in a negotiation technique called bartering. Bartering requires you to exchange something of value that you possess for something else of value that another person owns. The project is aimed at making you more aware of the role that emotions and their management as well as learning styles and motivation play in diverse decision-making environments.

***Class 1***

During Class 1, the Professor will briefly review the concept and practice of bartering, Assignment instructions, examples, and answer any questions. You will be able to use part of Class 1 for the project to start organizing your team’s strategy, assign individual team member roles, develop a communication plan for communicating/meeting with your team, etc.

***Instructions***

Each team is to acquire a $1.00 (or less, exclusive of tax, etc.) item of their choosing to be used for bartering. The initial bartering item can be something that a team member already owns or something that they purchase. This item then serves as the starting point for bartering. Subsequently, the item must be bartered at least five (5) times. The goal in each barter or exchange transaction is to receive an item of greater value than the one the team currently owns. Your team is not allowed to add anything such as cash, an additional item, or a service to the item that you are bartering. No cash exchanges are allowed. No decorating or re-packaging of the item in any way is permitted. The five or more exchanges must be completed with different individuals. You may not barter with the same person or organization or at the same venue (e.g., website or flea market) more than once. NO TRADING WITH MINORS.

Please use professional judgement and good taste appropriate for classroom discussion when selecting your items for exchange. No crude, lewd, or otherwise offensive or inappropriate items are permitted for exchange. Only conduct exchanges in safe locations in-person and online. If you are in doubt about the safety of the location, simply choose a different location.

***Required Conditions***

Given the foregoing instructions, the following are ***required conditions for the exchanges***:

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Conduct at least 5 exchanges – Take pictures or brief video of each exchange |
| 1. Item of greater value received for each exchange |
| 1. Value of each item documented in some way such as Amazon, E-Bay, etc. |
| 1. Final item benefits charitable organization in some way |
| 1. No cash or other items or services added to any exchange |
| 1. No decorating or re-packaging of the item |
| 1. Different venues and people used for each exchange |
| 1. NO TRADING WITH MINORS |
| 1. Professional judgment and good taste used in each exchange |
| 1. Exchanges conducted in safe locations in-person and online |

***Presentation***

During Class 6, each team will give a 15-minute PowerPoint presentation describing their experience. Specifically, the presentation should include:

1. Description of:
   1. Each exchange
      1. Where did the exchange take place and why did you choose this location?
      2. What was the item that you selected and why did you choose it?
      3. What is the value of the item? How did you assess and document its value?
   2. Final item
      1. Explain how your final item benefits a charitable organization.
      2. Ensure that you show a picture or video of the final item that you received along with an assessment of its value. Also include pictures or video of your team and the benefiting organization.
2. Discussion of OT & OB concepts involved in each transaction:
   1. Integrate at least five (5) references from as many different academic journal articles that relate to the concepts in the text chapters and which are applicable to your team’s project.
   2. Give specific examples from your bartering experiences to which the concepts from the references apply.
   3. You are required to cite the sources that you used in your slides and to include a list of your references on the last slide of your presentation. This means that you are to integrate the concepts from your reading and refer to them in a relevant way throughout your presentation using APA format.
3. Discussion of what your team would do differently
   1. Based upon your bartering experiences and the OT & OB concepts that you learned, what would your team have done differently to be more effective in each transaction?
   2. What could your team do to strengthen itself in future exchanges?

**Appendix B (Excerpted from Learning Management System)**

Graphical user interface, application, Word

Description automatically generated