

School of Business

Assignment 2, Part B

STUDENT INFORMATION

STUDENT NO.		SURNAME	
PHONE NO.		GIVEN NAMES	
E-MAIL			

Instructions for submission are found in the course description. Assignments with Cover Sheets not signed at the bottom will be returned unmarked and may then incur a penalty for late submission.

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

COURSE NAME	Business, Society and the Planet	COURSE CODE	BUGEN 5930
ASSIGNMENT DETAILS	Assignment 2 Part B - Business Values Assessment Report		
LECTURER NAME	Craig Hurley	Campus	Mt Helen
DUE DATE		SUBMITTED	

PLAGIARISM

The School of Business and the University regards as a very serious matter the action of a student who acts dishonestly or improperly, including plagiarism or cheating, in connection with his or her academic work. Under University Regulation 6.1.1 "Plagiarism" is defined as "...the presentation of the works of another person / other persons as though they are one's own by failing to properly acknowledge that person / those persons". Plagiarism may take many forms including:

direct copying of sentences, paragraphs or other extracts from someone else's published work (including on the Internet and in software) without acknowledging the source;

paraphrasing someone else's words without acknowledging the source;

using facts, information, ideas, concepts or diagrams derived from a source without acknowledging them;

producing assignments which should be the student's own independent work, in unauthorised collaboration with and/or using the work of other people (e.g. a student or tutor, or working in pairs or groups and producing similar assignments on individual assessment tasks

not referencing accurately (e.g. not citing correctly the work you have actually read)

OTHER UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR

stealing and later using other students' work (e.g. taking discs, picking up other's marked assignments)

recycling your own work / assignments or "double dipping" (e.g. re-submitting whole or significant parts of assignments across units, across years or across courses)

Assisting plagiarism - which may involve a student lending work (or by posting it on the Internet for sale) which is intended for submission for assessment, or which has already been submitted, so that it can be copied in part or whole and handed in by another student as that student's own work.

Students are warned against making assignments etc. available to others, as they then could be regarded as a contributor to plagiarism and may be penalized as if they themselves had committed an act of plagiarism.

Students are expected to be proficient with referencing and must always acknowledge any sources for work that is not their own. Inadequate referencing of cited materials is considered to be plagiarism. Details of referencing can be found on the following University web address: <http://www.ballarat.edu.au/aasp/is/library/research/citation/> or http://www.ballarat.edu.au/ard/learningandteaching/internal/Avoiding_Plagiarism_Guidelines_for_Students.doc

Student's Statement

I have read and understood the information provided on this assignment cover sheet relating to plagiarism and other unacceptable behavior and therefore declare that the attached work is entirely my own, except where work quoted is duly acknowledged in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for assessment in any other course or program.

Scenario

Amira was feeling really excited! After working for two years as an administrative officer with a small, family-owned labour hire company West Employment, she was offered her dream promotion.

In the past, West Employment's core business had been supplying teams of casual employees to work on the region's fruit and vegetable farms. However, West Employment had just been awarded a large contract with a multi-national Food and Beverage company to find new jobs for more than 200 retrenched workers that had lost their jobs when one of this company's regional packaging factories had closed.

To deliver on this contract, West Employment needed to increase the size of their own team of Client Managers and Amira was an obvious choice for one of these roles. Amira had an intimate knowledge of the company's operations and was valued by the company owner/managers, Vinod and Julie. Not only was this promotion a great reward for her previous hard work and recognition of her management skills and abilities, Amira felt the greater responsibility attached to the Client Manager role would give her a chance to really shine!

Amira's first few months in this new role were a whirlwind of meeting with clients, filling out paperwork, meeting with prospective employers, filling out more paperwork, entering data and meeting with her Client Management colleagues. Amira loved the challenge of these responsibilities, but also took great pride in the service West Employment was providing to their regional community.

About one year after the closure of the factory, things settled down and West Employment had placed more than 120 of the retrenched workers into new employment positions. Their success had substantially raised the profile of the company and enhanced their reputation; they were seen as the 'good guys' working hard to look after the workers and their community. West Employment's efforts were also recognised in the local media and they increased their share of the local employment market, gaining several new clients. Amira was very proud of her contribution to these achievements.

Not only did this success raise the profile of the company, it was also financially rewarding for the company owners. When the food packaging factory was closed, the parent company, the administrators and the Government had established the Workers' Rescue Fund to assist the retrenched workers in retraining and/or finding another job. The West Employment contract was with the Workers' Rescue Fund and was based on performance – the more jobs they found for their clients, the more they got paid.

To claim these payments, West Employment needed to provide evidence that they had provided one or more of these services for a client – this was usually just a form or letter stating the details of what the company had done for the client, which must also have been signed by the client. However it was sometimes difficult to get the clients' signatures, as many of the clients had moved away from the area, changed address, didn't respond to email or telephone messages, didn't have the time to call into the office or just didn't see the signing of more forms as being important.

One day, after a meeting between Julie and the Client Managers team, Amira was chatting with her colleague Bohai, and mentioned her frustration at not being able to contact some of her clients and that their forms had not been signed. Julie overheard this comment and was very surprised, saying 'Really? Hasn't anyone shown you how to fix that? Come with me!'

Bohai and the other Client Managers looked at each other and smiled – Amira didn't know whether to feel embarrassed (because she didn't know how to do something that everyone else seemed to know about!) ... or worried that she was about to be reprimanded in Julie's office.

Amira need not have worried. She followed Julie to her office and sat down, while Julie opened on the computer screen a scanned/electronic copy of an incomplete form detailing the services provided to one of Amira's clients. Julie calmly apologised for not explaining this process to her earlier and then demonstrated how to Copy and Paste a client's signature from one form to another. Amira was stunned and thought, 'That's weird', but did not push the issue.

Amira then returned to her desk, feeling a little foolish for not having thought of this solution herself. She spent the rest of the day reviewing her client documentation and copying and pasting the signatures of her 'missing' clients to complete the forms the way she had been shown by Julie. But, as the afternoon passed, she began asking herself more and more questions about what she was doing, and she became more and more uncomfortable doing it. She asked herself, 'Is it okay to sign a form on a client's behalf, without their knowledge or permission? Is it legal?' She could see why the company was doing this, but she also knew it wasn't right.

Amira knows why she feels so uncomfortable and wants to give voice to her values. With whom should she speak and what should she say?

Script

Amira had thought overnight about her discomfort at being expected to copy and paste client signatures, but she wanted to discuss these issues with a colleague first, so she approached Bohai.

Amira: Hi Bohai, have you got a minute?

Bohai: Sure! Did you enjoy your little meeting with Julie?

Amira: Actually, that's what I want to talk about. Julie told me that when I can't get a client's signature, I should copy their signature from another document on file and paste it onto the Workers' Rescue Fund Claim Form. Does anybody else do this?

Bohai: Yeah, we all do it. Look, I'm not thrilled with the idea of forging documents without the client's knowledge, but it's impossible to get every client to sign every form - how else are we supposed to get this paperwork finished?

Amira: But Bohai, this is illegal!

Bohai: Well, not really. These are our clients and we *have* done the work and we are telling the truth ... this is all above board. The client's signature is just a small detail. Don't worry about it!

Amira: Hmm, I suppose

Amira didn't press Bohai any further but left their discussion feeling even more confused and alone. It appeared to Amira as though she was the only Client Manager that was uncomfortable with this practise. After considering this some more, she knocks on the door of Julie's office:

Amira: Hi Julie, do you have a second?

Julie: Yep, what's up?

Amira: I've been thinking a lot about the completion of the Workers' Rescue Fund claim forms and I'm really confused ...

Julie: Look, I know what you're going to say, and no, the copying of signatures is not something we would normally condone. Most of the time, we are able to contact our clients and they are able to sign the forms, but we can only do so much! This is the system with which we have to comply ... if we want to get paid on time for the work we have done, we need to have those signatures on time. It's as simple as that!

Amira: I can understand the importance of getting these forms signed, but I am worried the risks might outweigh the benefits.

Julie: What do you mean?

Amira: Well, as you have said, copying client signatures is not something we would normally condone ... and it is definitely something we would not want to become public knowledge. This practise puts at risk all of the good work we have done in building our reputation and trust in our community. And can you imagine what the cost would be if the Workers' Rescue Fund – or the Government, or our current clients found out we

were forging documents? Our name would be mud and we would never be offered a contract ever again! Not to mention any fines or criminal charges that could come our way! And can you imagine the awkward conversations we would have to have with our existing clients?

Julie: Amira! Come on! I think you are overreacting. This is not a big deal! Across all our activities, we are doing a great job. In fact, we are one of the industry leaders in this area – we get more of our forms signed by the client than most of our competitors!

Everyone in the industry knows how difficult it can be to get the signature of every worker! I know of many employment agencies that don't even try to contact their clients. They get one signature at their first meeting and copy that for the rest of the time that client is on their books! The handful of signatures we copy and paste is not even worth worrying about!

Amira: Julie, it is great that we are leading in this area – this is something I am proud of. But ... forging signatures isn't consistent with status as an industry leader nor our hard-earned reputation as one of the 'good guys' ...

Julie: I wish you would stop calling it forgery!

Amira: Julie, changing this practice is *an opportunity* for us to *enhance* our reputation by providing more leadership in this space!

Julie: Oh yeah? How?

Amira: Well, if this is a common problem in the industry, where agencies are feeling forced into forging signatures of clients, I am sure the Fund Administrators and the Government would like to know about it! We should be talking with them about this problem and working with them to develop better systems. Maybe we need to find another way of providing evidence of the services we have provided. Maybe the client's approval could be recorded from a telephone conversation. Maybe we could provide a letter from their employer or from the college at which they are training, maybe ...

Julie: Actually, maybe we could just ask the administrators for some leeway or tolerance for non-compliance. We all know we can't get 100% of the forms signed, maybe we could just agree that they will still pay us for 5% of claims without the client's signature.

Amira: That's right! I'm sure there is a better way for us to do this!

Julie: Yes, it is worth having the conversation. I will mention this to Vinod and perhaps we might discuss this further with the Fund administrators, okay?

Amira: Okay!

Amira left Julie's office feeling very relieved, as though a great weight had been lifted from her shoulders. While Julie hadn't yet changed the practise, Amira felt there was the chance things could change. She was pleased she had decided to say something to Julie.