**Course:** Business Management

**Company:** Reitmans

**Part 1—Report**

**1. Organization Overview**

**Describe the organization you worked for:**

**a)** What type of organization is it (chain, single proprietorship, partnership, franchise etc.)?

Reitmans is a chain retail store that sells women’s clothing. The company is settled in going above and beyond looks by presenting customers with a variety of sizes to any type of body shape, ensuring creativity, quality, and innovation in their products as well as providing excellent customer services offered by their employees. Customers may take advantage of the company's wider selection of well-chosen items to better fulfill their desires and requirements, and to create a personalized shopping experience that can highlight fresh and timely offerings from partner companies like Reitmans.

**b)** Include a small organizational chart showing job titles and hierarchy of more than 3 employees, and approximately how many employees there are at each level.

After working for a year at Reitmans so far I only had come to know and deal with the 1 District Manager, 2 Technicians and 1 HR representative. There are at least 13 district managers around Canada, in British Columbia there are 29 stores each one with at least 1 manager, 1 assistant manager, 1 keyholder and a minimum of 4 store associates.

 CEO

FASHION DEPT IT DEPT SALES DEPT HR

DISTRICT MANAGER

STORE MANAGER

ASSISTANT MANAGER

STORE ASSOCIATE KEY HOLDER

SUPERVISOR

TECHNICIAN

**c)** Include a brief description of the organization’s mandate / goals. These are provided by the organization and can be described or copied.

The company is founded in Respect, Integrity, Growth and Commitment. They are committed to promoting ethical sourcing standards, sustainable and responsible business practices. They know that the employees at the sales floor are vital to keep the business running so they are really attached to this values and always enphase their worry about the wellbeing and accomplishment of their workers in the grow of the company at each meeting between Stores Managers and their District Managers and occasional visits from supervisors from HR.

**2. Job Details**

**Provide specific details about your job:**

**a)** Which department did you work for? Who was your direct supervisor or boss?

I started working as a Store Associate, in the beginning my main responsibilities were to organize the store and merchandise as well as help customers. When working at retail or any kind of job which you have to directly deal with other people, being either coworkers or customers, can be educational and stressful. My Manager’s name is Rosmery, who from the very first day was very friendly and polite and would always ask me how I was doing and complement my skills and growth during my training phase. I never had to worry about being micromanaged since she would make it very clear what were our tasks and what was expected from us, and even if something could not be accomplished she would congratulate us for our hard work and explain what will be done to accomplish the task in the future.

To better explain I will tell the following situation: many customers that ordered items during December and January had their deliveries delayed because of many factors like weather conditions and shortage staff (specially in the delivery services), those that didn't received or wished to return some items would come to the physical stores to get their refund, but according to the company's return policy and the instructions I received through my training I'm not authorized to perform any refund and returns that has passed 30 days of the purchase date. Even though I sympathize with the customers situations because of the many unprecedented events that made their orders be delayed I am still unable to do it but I would always try using the best of my customer service and communicative skills to explain to them what they can do, which is to contact the company's customer service, but some customer get angrier and try to talk to my manager, some even tried to get me in trouble by saying I have some kind of fault in the situation. My Manager would always respond to each customer in a polite manner, listen to their concerns and suggest the best outcome to them, always reassuring that the situation would be dealt with and not to worry since the company has a really good history of great customer service and its reviews prove it.

**b)** Describe the major functions / duties / tasks that you performed.

Besides talking with customers to help them find what they may need during their shopping or needing further instructions about the care of certain types of clothing I am responsible for leading the sales floor when the Manager and Assistant Manager are not available. I am also responsible for opening and closing the store, adjusting schedule if ever needed, receiving new merchandise and putting it at the sales floor according to the visual guides provided by the company for each season, changing promotions and organizing new visual around the store.

**c)** What accomplishment(s) are you proud of during your time with the company?

Retail jobs can be good thanks to the team work and efforts to help the store and the customers. Despite some tough clients, I've been able to get to know many of my store's regulars time and time again over the past year, which has made my day a lot better. The few who come in that you can have a good conversation and help in their shopping can really change your attitude. I also learned a lot from my retail experience. I've been able to apply a lot of my time management and leadership skills to other areas of my life, especially college and social life.

**3. Training and Orientation**

**Describe any on-the-job orientation and training that you received:**

**a)** How did you learn to do the job? Formal training? Personal instruction by your supervisor? Peer-to-peer learning – did you pick things up from co-workers? Figured things out for yourself?

I was trained and supervised by my Manager and the Assistant Manager, the first week was mostly formal training, once I was used to the environment then any feedback and new skills and knowledge would be through informal training. Usually I can take any of my questions and thoughts to either my manager or assistant manager since they are really helpful in answering anything in a simple and clear way without any judge or prejudice for my questions or lack off knowledge, actually they usually praise me for being so interested in learning new stuff and not just assuming what is the answer. Besides practicing and learning basic retail skills in selling and operating day-to-day store business, I was able to immerse myself into effective communication, teamwork and leadership, scheduling and costs. There's always something different to do each day, from greeting new and different people that enter the store to opening boxes, organizing new products around the store and exchanging experiences with my coworkers.

**b)** How was it to work for your supervisor? Did he or she provide helpful feedback?

My manager is really calm and have great leadership skills, she has a lot of patience and tries her best to explain about the company's policies and procedures while assuring me that my way of talking to the customers is great and there is nothing I have to worry about because she knows how hard I work and how good my customer service is. She was always helpful when I needed help, never judged me if I ever had any kind of predicament or mistake, always assuring me of my growth and skills quality as well as showing sympathy with my current situation in Canada as an international student.

**4. Company Culture**

**Share your observations regarding the company culture:**

**a)** How would you describe the organization “climate” and the management style?

The company provides an environment of inclusivity and positive connections, indicating their commitment to their values. The benefits and rewards are reasonable. Having an open mind and friendliness are expected in most businesses and Reitmans is no different. The company stimulates their employees to always improve themselves as well as offering many opportunities for employees to grow in the company’s functions offering a dynamic, challenging and creative career path. The company is diverse and cares about the commitment in their employees while also respecting and valuing who you are.

**b)** What were the main differences between organizations in Canada and your home country that you observed?

The main differences between brazilians organization and canadian organization would be: punctuality, age diversity, separation between work and personal life, technology embracement, eco conscious. In Brazil there’s this kind of work culture that a good work is something that takes a long time to perform, usually the approach to time and appointments are somewhat flexible but it’s also expected to work extra hours or even take work assignments to home and even have to give up your free time until the work is done, there isn’t many young people working since the unemployment rate is really high and if an elder person wants to have apply for some kind of job of any level they would have very little chances to get hired. While some companies in Brazil try to make partnerships and projects to show their worry about the environment and sustainability, it is quite difficult to authenticate their statement and achievement towards said projects. In Canada organizations are really diverse and the work ethic is pretty respectful towards employees personal lives and schedules, eve thought the bureaucracy still exists you are still able to negotiate and rearrange certain conditions to keep up your work, and even if you plan to change to another job or area of work is still more simple and even recommend so people can be more satisfied and confident in achieving their personal goals.

**Part 2 – Reflect**

**1. Application of business theory**

**a)** List specific examples when you applied (used) the business theories, frameworks, and approaches you learned in the classroom during your practicum to solve some of the company’s problems.

I have been working at my current store for a year. It's interesting how this job that seems so simple requires both “hard” technical skills as well as “soft” people skills. You need to have an idea of how many people are in your store at all times; who is in there with the intent to buy and who has the intent to steal. Customers may be rude sometimes and can really get under your skin, that’s when you need to learn to just smile back and move on from the situation. Problem-solving skills are important to figure out what you need to move around the store to increase the sales. Physical condition is also important since most working days are spent standing, stacking, reaching, facing, moving around the store, and performing a multitude of other tasks, most of which involve moving the body in some way.

**b)** List examples of when you used your ability to analyze a business problem and propose a creative, practical solution using reasoned strategies and arguments.

In May I had to plan and organize my schedule with the store since my family would come to Canada to visit me and I wished to spend as much of my time as possible with them. The days before a vacation can be hectic because I was preparing myself and my colleagues for my time-off. Previously I had sent a request for a short break to my manager, who was able to organize the employees schedules, but just a day before I leave some issues came forward like one coworker that got sick and another who was unavailable and me who was leaving for a week, I offered to search for someone else to take the shift since I had helped at other locations stores I had the contact number of some managers and coworkers which could help the process in requesting one of their employees to cover the shift since no one else in our store could do it. Making the right preparations before my vacation ensured the days leading up to my departure were orderly, I was able to relax while on vacation and coming back to work was also a smooth process.

Even though the hours working in retail may be long and sales targets may seem unreachable it's extremely important to have good communication with your team in an effective way so you can ask for help and assist others in the best way possible. Everyone in a team has their on lives outside of work and sure they are also subjects to uncertain and sudden events that may happen in their lives that may affect the team, but since we have good communication the rescheduling and rearrangement of teams can be done before it can affects the store and it's sales.

**2.** New knowledge and skills gained

**a)** What did you learn about North American business practices that you didn’t already know?

North American business may seem more strict than Latin American business towards their recruiting, training and work culture but it’s also really respectful and helpful towards their employees and how it will impact them. The embrace in technology that makes communication much easier and faster is also of great help, the many ways you can find contact information to either your manager or the HR department is also really impressive. The diversity of people that you get to know and learn from it’s really impressive and helpful to learn and craft skills as well as share experiences with your coworker and get to know each other more. This kind of environment helps create bonds and help with the communication between coworkers and superiors inside the company which increases productivity and loyalty in their employees.

**b)** Did any of your classes help to prepare you for this work placement? What could we include next time to better prepare you?

Through what was taught during Workplace Preparation and Business Correspondence classes I was able to prepare my resume and myself for any following job interviews that I had before accepting the job offer at Reitmans. Cross-Cultural Communication and Organizational Behavior helped me understand and adapt to the Canadian workplace and the diversity and differences that may occur between each company and its employees. Principles of Management and Leadership Skills prepared me to understand how to better help my team as well as get me the recognition to become a Key Holder which also made me gain more responsibilities which I was already familiar with such as the financial system in a company that I learned through Introduction to Accounting.

**c)** Did this practicum opportunity help you improve and develop your business communications skills and professional vocabulary?

During my time working at Reitmans I was able to improve my communication and business skills as well as my English in a professional environment which allowed me to have daily conversations with different people. The company would always incentive me to practice my vocabulary and ask any questions if needed, any sort of mistake or misunderstanding would always be analyzed, solved and reviewed to be able to learn from it.

**d)** What were the most important things you learned that will help you in your future career?

Reviewing my previous classes about Interpersonal Skills and Leadership Skills I can clearly say that getting feedback and incentive from your coworkers and customers can have a great deal to build one's confidence and their ability to diffuse difficult situations. When dealing with customers that have some kind of problem or a troubled coworker, if you show that you care and that you are at least trying to understand the person's situation even if you don't have a solution they will at least have more sympathy and be more comprehensive about the interaction that is happening and be more open to other alternatives even if doesn't meet their criteria.

**3. Networking/Making professional connections**

**a)** What networking were you able to do?

One of the best parts of working in retail is to meet more people that work in other stores and other locations. My schedule is also pretty flexible so when another co-worker either in the same store or different location is not available or needs to switch shifts I'm usually the one they will call to cover it. This kind of flexibility allowed me to meet different managers, more co-workers, sometimes even regular customers that frequent more than one location recognize me from a previous time they came to the store and I think it's so invigorating and interesting.

**b)** Discuss any connections you made that may help you in the future.

Working for this company allowed me to connect with other store managers and their employees who had the chance to evaluate my progress and help me with their suggestions, feedback and by sharing their own experiences with me. I know that if I need future reference, recommendation or guide for professional purposes they can help me in the future.

**4. Value of co-op opportunity and overall academic experience**

**a)** Did this experience meet your expectations? Why? or Why not?

My expectation in the beginning were to meet different people, be in a environment that promotes diversity and incentivize their employees to learn more and improve not only themselves but the team as well. The company changed my views about the retail industry and changed my expectations as well. Reitmans revived my desire in working hard and being helpful in a team organization. I could prove their worry about customers and their values and commitment to excellence by promoting innovation, growth, development and teamwork, making their employees strive to serve their customers to the best of their ability.

**b)** What were the pros and cons of this experience?

The pros is that I was able to be in contact with many people from different backgrounds that would share their experiences with me and give me constructive feedbacks about my work, skills and perspectives for the future, I also was able to learn how to keep track at trends and any new product that may come up and how it impacts the sales and revenues of the company. The fast paced environment and the importance of teamwork were great ways for me to improve my skills, the chances to interact with others made it possible for me to improve my communication in English and how to adapt to people that may not speak the same language. Despite some tough clients, I've been able to get to know many of my store's regulars time and time again over the past year, which has made my day a lot better. The few who come in that you can have a good conversation and help in their shopping can really change your attitude. I also learned a lot from my retail experience. I've been able to apply a lot of my time management and leadership skills to other areas of my life, especially college and social life.

When working at retail or any kind of job which you have to directly deal with other people, being either coworkers or customers, can be educational and stressful. Customers may be rude sometimes and can really get under your skin, that’s when you need to learn to just smile back and move on from the situation. Unfortunately retail sales associate jobs don't usually have the highest starting wages, and unlike jobs in the food industry retail, workers don't have a tip factor to help them out.

**Part 3 – Predict**

**a)** Which skills do you want to develop further?

Now that I have experienced working at retail I have taken interest in learning more about this area and even considering to stay longer and one day be able to work as an Assistant Manager or even as an Manager. In the future I may immerse myself into Accounting to have better chances in dealing with financial prospects that the retail business may offer, this is all thanks to my teacher in the Introducing to Account, Sidney, as well as the assistant manager at my current job, who are great professionals and shows lots of skills and knowledge in accounting and help me understand and increase my interest in this area of working. Also thanks to my manager and amazing teaching from Tawsif, my understanding and desire in growing in a company to take responsibility from a group and become a successful and respectable leader that help and inspire others.

**b)** How will you build on the skills you learned in this program?

I may keep working in the retail industry while viewing any future opportunities to grow as a professional business manager, by experiencing and learning from others. By working with the team and keeping myself motivated while focusing on the elements of the work that make me find enjoyable to work at the company while living and building my life in Canada.

**c)** What is your long-term career goal?

My career goal is to be an Manager and lead my own team and help not only the company but my coworkers as well to accomplish new goals and keep growing my networking with many other people from different cultures and careers as well.

**d)** Did your work experience cause you to confirm or change your career goal?

My work experience at Reitmans changed my perspective towards my future and my goals. I still want to keep living and working in Canada and this company made me feel good about the prospect of my future and career growth in their business.

**e)** What’s next in your career plan now?

Right now I will keep working on my current company, grow in the profession and become an Assistant Manager and maybe a Manager in the future. I will apply for my post graduation visa, I will try to get my Permanent Resident or Work Permit so I can build and strengthen my relationship Canada and be an active and productive member of canadian society.