An Experimental Investigation of the Impact of Relaxation Techniques on Stress and Task Performance

by

Meagan Ferguson

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Mark Frame, Chair

Dr. Michael Hein

Dr. Kim Ujcich Ward

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ABSTRACT

How an individual chooses to cope with occupational stress can affect their ability to perform on the job. In today's society, organizations continue to implement relaxation interventions and wellness programs to positively impact the well-being of their employees. To further investigate the impact of relaxation interventions on stress (perceived and physiological) and task performance, the present study incorporated a 30-minute intervention into a 2-hour work simulation. During this study measurements of perceived stress were gathered before and after the intervention and physiological measurements of stress were gathered before, during, and after the intervention. The findings of this study suggest that one 30-minute session of mindfulness meditation may not be enough to significantly impact an individual's stress and ability to perform in the workplace.

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CHAPTER I: LITERATURE REVIEW

Stress

Stress is a term that most people recognize and experience on a regular basis. Salas, Driskell, and Hughes (1996) defined stress as a "process by which certain environmental demands evoke an appraisal process in which perceived demand exceeds resources and results in undesirable, physiological, behavioral, or social outcomes" (p.6). In addition to the normal day-to-day stress that people experience; people in the workforce may experience what is known as occupational stress. Occupational stress, otherwise known as job stress, is defined as a physical and emotional response to the demands of an occupation that do not align with the abilities, resources, and needs of the employee (Center for Disease Control, 2010). Often, workers will experience occupational stress from the demands of their daily tasks and duties. Findings indicate that occupational stress stems from an increase in workload, uncertainty about the future, poor communication, insufficient resources, and conflict (Ongori & Agolla, 2008).

When it comes to the different types of stressors that people encounter in the workplace, some are short term and others can last for months or years. A short-term stressor, otherwise known as an acute stressor, is a "sudden, novel, intense and relatively short duration that disrupts goal-oriented behavior, and requires proximate responses" (Salas et al., 1996, p.6). In other words, an acute stressor is an event or situation that occurs unexpectedly and should be dealt with soon after recognition.

Experiencing high levels of stress on a regular basis can cause a variety of problems for individuals. When people are frequently exposed to a stressor or several

short-term stressors in succession for an extended period of time, this can lead to the development of chronic stress. Chronic stress can occur when the biological stress response is continuously activated for months or even years. When the individual does not have time to return to a resting state between acute stressors, they are more likely to experience chronic stress (Dhabhar, 2012). Furthermore, choosing to ignore everyday acute stressors may also lead to the development of chronic stress (American Psychological Association, 2010).

Although acute stress can positively affect people in certain situations, chronic stress typically does not have the same affect. The presence of chronic stress has become a significant problem that results in a variety of negative health, social, and economic consequences (Smith, Hancock, Blake-Mortimer, & Eckert, 2007). Some common health problems associated with chronic stress are suppression and abnormal immune functioning, impairment in brain functioning, increased susceptibility to infections, depression, heart disease, raised blood pressure, anxiety, muscle pain, and even some types of cancer (American Psychological Association, 2010; Dhabhar, 2012). The health related consequences of stress are detrimental and it is no surprise that acute and chronic stress also can affect the behaviors of individuals while working.

Stress and Performance

Beyond the aforementioned health consequences, stress has been found to affect the task performance of individuals. Continued stress that negatively impacts an individual's level of performance, can lead to an increase in turnover and a decrease in

productivity and organizational performance (Ongori & Agolla, 2008). For the purpose of the present research, the focus was on the relationship between stress and performance.

Numerous studies have found inconsistent results on the strength and direction of the relationship between stress and performance (Wallace, Edwards, Arnold, Fraizer, & Finch, 2009). When it comes to understanding the inconsistency, researchers have separated stress into two categories, challenging and hindrance (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005). Researchers have found that a particular level of stress that challenges an individual, will improve their overall performance. In comparison, hindrance stress prevents the individual from performing at their level of competence. Specifically, in a meta-analytic test done by Lepine et al. (2005), they found that challenging stress had a positive relationship with overall performance in comparison to the negative relationship hindrance stress had with overall performance. In line with Lepine et al. (2005), Wallace et al. (2009) found that challenging and hindrance stressors predict role-based performance. Challenging stressors (or manageable stressors) were found to be positively related to performance, while hindrance stressors (otherwise known as unmanageable stressors or controlling stressors) were negatively related to performance.

Based on a four-stage model of stress and performance, the individual first encounters an environmental stimuli (such as a threat, noise, time constraints, task load, group pressure, or other stressors) which forces the individual to determine the extent of the stimuli and if they entail the resources to meet the demand. For example, the

individual will decide if this demand is threat or something they can handle. After making this decision, the individual will develop positive or negative performance expectations. As a result of the stress, the individual can experience change in their physiological reactions, cognitive effects, emotional reactions, social behavior, and performance outcomes (Salas, et al. 1996).

In addition to the four-stage model of stress and performance, McGrath (1976) posited the Process Model of Task Performance. This model provides an explanation of the relationship between stress and work-related task performance. When an individual encounters a task or assignment, the level of perceived stress will be dependent on the perceived importance and whether or not they feel that they can complete the task. Once they have appraised the situation, the individual determines the necessary coping responses they will need to handle the task stressor. Based on the response selected, the employee is evaluated on the quality, quantity, and speed of their performance.

In a study by Leung, Chan, and Olomolaiye (2008), the effects of stress on Construction Project Managers' (CPM) performance were investigated. Typically, CPM's experience high levels of stress due to time pressures and uncertainty of the construction projects. Leung et al. (2008) found that organizational performance was negatively correlated with objective stress, burnout, and physiological stress. In other words, as CPM stress level increased, the organization's performance declined. Furthermore, a negative causal relationship was found between objective stress and task

performance. When people experience stress due to the discrepancy between their perceived and actual ability, their ability to perform the task declines.

So how do individuals prevent their stress from affecting their performance? In many situations, people will experience work stress when the demands of the job surpass the belief in their ability to cope (Cox, 1993). An extremely high level of stress has been found to negatively influence the well-being of an individual (Leung et al., 2008). Due to the frequency of stressful situations in the workplace, it is vital that people develop methods for managing their stress. In 2001, The American Institute of Stress reported that 80% of workers felt stressed while at work, and almost 50% of those people said they need instruction on how to manage stress. Learning how to cope and control acute stress on a daily basis may help workers avoid the development of chronic stress.

Coping Strategies

People experience stress on a regular basis, inside and outside the workplace. One determinant of how stress affects individuals is how they choose to cope with it. Furthermore, people view events and situations very differently. One person may view a situation as stressful while another person would not consider the same situation stressful at all. Regardless of their perception of stress, when people are stressed, it is still imperative to provide them with the appropriate tools and skills to cope with the stress they are experiencing.

Some reports suggest that 50% of large U.S. corporations have some form of a stress management program (Center for Disease Control, 1999). When it comes to

handling stress in a proactive way, there are a variety of coping strategies that have been found to be effective. Coping strategies are methods people use to deal with threatening situations (Center for Studies on Human Stress, 2014). People can use coping strategies to help maintain an ideal amount of physical, psychological, and social well-being (Hart & Cooper, 2001). One strategy that is used to cope with stress is problem-focused coping. Problem-focused coping aims to work on the problem or situation that is causing the person to feel stressed. Utilization of problem-focused strategies involves taking control of the problem, seeking needed information on the issue, and evaluating the pros and cons related to solutions in an effort to resolve the problem and reduce the stress associated with the problem (McLeod, 2010).

Another common coping strategy is emotion-focused coping. Emotion-focused coping attempts to reduce the negative responses that are related to stressful situations. For example, individuals attempt to reduce embarrassment, fear, anxiety, frustration, depression and excitement through music, meditation, physical exercise, writing in a journal, or other similar activities (Galor, 2012; McLeod, 2009).

In recent studies, a variety of emotion-focused coping strategies have been used. Researchers have investigated how relaxation, yoga, mindfulness, meditation, and aerobic training help individuals cope with their stress induced emotions. These particular interventions have been found to reduce the amount of stress that individual's experience (Barella, Etnier & Chang, 2010; Bilderbeck, Farias, Brazil, &Jakobowitz, 2013; Geary &

Rosenthal, 2011; Smith et al., 2007; Vancampfort et al., 2011). Such techniques have been used in a variety of settings to examine the affects they have on stressed individuals.

McCraty, Atkinson, and Tomasino (2003) found that a workplace stress reduction program positively affected the blood pressure and emotional health of hypertensive employees. After completing the 16-hour program, the employees were asked to use the tools daily for the next three months. After three months, the participants reported significantly lower levels of blood pressure and emotional distress. In addition to the positive results, the researchers found relevant improvements within the organization.

Furthermore, different forms of meditation have been found to have effects on an individual's well-being. Specifically, meditation has been found to reduce stress and anxiety, heighten subjective well-being, and improve individual study and work habits (Rajagopal, Pugazhanthi, & George, 2012; Singh, Sharma, & Talwar, 2012). In particular, mindfulness meditation directs the individual to focus on what is happening in the current moment. During this form of meditation, individuals close their eyes and focus their attention on the physical sensation of their breathing. This form of meditation is a skill that can be easily learned and has been found to reduce stress and control pain (Ott, 2004).

In recent studies, the effects of mindfulness meditation in the workplace have been investigated. Hülsheger, Alberts, Feinholdt, and Lang (2013) found mindfulness to affect emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Participants who completed the

mindfulness intervention reported a significant decrease in emotional exhaustion and an improvement in job satisfaction.

A systematic review of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programs by Sharma and Rush (2014) examined whether MBSR programs were effective and alternative methods for reducing stress. MBSR was defined as a program that incorporates mindfulness meditation and yoga for a period of 8 weeks. They examined the results of 17 different studies that were conducted from 2008 to 2014. Of the 17 studies, 15 MBSR programs were found to positively affect physiological and psychological consequences related to stress and anxiety. Although these studies found positive results, few used randomized controlled designs and adequate sample sizes.

Similarly, Geary and Rosenthal (2011) found that a MBSR program positively affected self-reported measures of stress. Individuals that completed the MBSR program reported lower levels of stress at the conclusion of the program. In addition, those individuals also reported lower levels of stress 12-months after the program was finished.

Creswell, Pacilio, Lindsay, and Brown (2014) investigated the effects of mindfulness meditation on self-report, biochemical, and medical measurements of stress. Creswell et al. (2014) found a small dose of mindfulness meditation training to positively affect self-reported psychological stress reactivity, while salivary cortisol and blood pressure reactivity increased. When considering these findings, it is important to note the small sample size that was used for this study. The use of a larger sample size may produce alternative findings.

As you can see, there are a variety of interventions that have been found to affect individuals' stress. However, some these methods are fairly involved and difficult to do inside the workplace. For example, some of the MBSR programs include mindfulness exercises and physical activity (i.e. yoga). For this study, a less effortful and involved technique known as mindfulness meditation that people can incorporate into their day-to-day work activities was utilized.

The primary goals of a stress reduction program are to teach people how to deal with stress, promote creative thinking and communication, and increase the overall effectiveness within the organization. For organizations to understand the need for stress reducing interventions (such as, mindfulness meditation), they need to see significant results. If the intervention is proven to reduce an employee's level of stress, they are more likely to implement this type of intervention. To provide organizations with this evidence, appropriate measurements of stress must be used.

Measuring Stress

When it comes to measuring stress, there have been a variety of different approaches (behavior science, biochemical, and medical). The behavioral science approach involves collecting data through self-report techniques, such as surveys, questionnaires, and interviews. The results of these self-report techniques tend to include information on the somatic, cognitive, and affective aspects of peoples' perceived stress. For example, these self-report techniques can identify the nature of the stressor, how

people cope, and a variety of components that contribute to the stress process (Sulsky & Smith, 2005).

Typically structured questionnaires have been utilized more than any other data collection method (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). For instance, some researchers have investigated how the participants feel while handling stress. In a study conducted by Hartfiel et al. (2011), they used the Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes (IPPA) to determine how confident participants felt while handling stressful situations. The level of confidence that was reported determined how resilient the individual was towards stress.

Another common questionnaire that researchers have used to investigate stress is the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Meremelstein (1983). Multiple researchers have utilized this scale to address the feelings and thoughts on stress from their participants in the last month (Hartfiel et al., 2012; Dougall, Swanson, Grimm, Jenney, & Frame, 2011). The higher the participant scores on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), the less likely they feel equipped to cope with stressful situations.

Unfortunately, while using self-report measures, researchers have run into some issues with participants' responses. One issue that may occur is that people respond in a way that they feel is socially acceptable. For example, an employee may feel that stress is a sign of emotional weakness and admitting that they're stressed could possibly effect their reputation within the organization (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). This presence of this

fear may cause the individual to respond the opposite of how they actually feel. In addition to participants modifying their responses, people tend to lack the ability to remember their true feelings (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). Individuals may struggle to recall their feelings after the situation has passed. Their responses to the questionnaire or during the interview may differ from how they actually felt.

In addition to how a person thinks they feel, their body is also responding to the stress of the situation. When a person encounters a stressful situation, their body prepares to enter the fight or flight response. In this response, the stressor triggers the body to send a message to the hypothalamus, located in the brain. After the alert is received, the hypothalamus activates the sympathetic branch of the autonomic nervous system. This particular branch then releases noradrenaline, which raises the individual's heart rate, blood pressure, and level of alertness. Coinciding with the activation of the sympathetic nervous system, the hypothalamus also activates an inner layer of cells located in the adrenal glands. The activation of these cells, also known as the medulla, alerts the body to release catecholamine. In response to the activation of the sympathetic nervous system and adrenal glands, researchers can measure the physiological and biochemical changes in the human body that are commonly associated with stress (Sulsky & Smith, 2005).

Recently, when assessing the stress of individuals, there has been focus on the biochemical and medical measurement of stress. The biochemical measurements of stress focus on the measurement of catecholamine, adrenaline, noradrenaline, and glucocorticoids. An example of a glucocorticoid that is commonly used is cortisol.

Although these measurements have been used in a variety of studies, there have been issues with validity due to sensitivity and specificity issues (Sulsky & Smith, 2005).

When using physiological measurements of stress, researchers focus on the cardiovascular functions, such as the heart rate, and blood pressure levels of individuals between periods of rest and stressful situations (Anshel, 1996). When measuring stress through blood pressure, it is recommended that baseline readings should be collected before and after the stressor for each participant. Comparing physiological stress among different participants results in an abundance of variability (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). It must also be noted that the measurement of stress is not flawless through the use of physiological variables. For example, posture, physical activity, caffeine intake, nicotine levels, heredity and diet can influence reported measures (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). It is vital that these factors are taken into account when using physiological measurements of stress.

Due to the limitations of using one method over another, combinations of self-report and physiological measures were used in the present research. Although accurately measuring stress is essential, it is also crucial to determine how long of an intervention is necessary.

Time and Duration of Stress Reduction Program

In the past, researchers have used different durations of time to study the effects of exercise and relaxation techniques. Barella et al. (2010) found that an acute bout of exercise affected the cognitive performance of healthy older adults. The information-

processing speed was found to be faster for those who participated in a 20-minute moderate bout of exercise. Although processing speed improved immediately after, the effects of exercise were not found to improve other forms of cognitive functioning. The researchers found that acute bouts of exercise produced short-term benefits for healthy adults.

In addition to acute bouts of physical exercise, Vancampfort et al., (2011) reported a decrease in the stress and anxiety of individuals with schizophrenia after a single session of yoga or aerobic exercise. After a 20 or 30-minute session, individuals reported an increase in their well-being and lower levels of psychological stress and anxiety.

Although short-term sessions of relaxation or exercise have not produced long-term positive effects, it should be noted that these studies used self-report measures to determine levels of stress. By using a combination of self-report and physiological measures, there is a better chance of accurately assessing an individual's stress.

The Present Study

Based on previous research and findings, the present research investigated the effects of participating in a meditation intervention during a stressful period of time. Essentially, if an organization can provide their employees with proper tools and training to cope with stress on a daily basis, they may enhance individual and organizational performance. Based on the findings of Ongori and Agolla (2008), significant gain for an organization can be found if they can identify signs of occupational stress. Curbing the

stress before it impacts the individuals can make a substantial impact on the entire organization. Furthermore, acute meditation sessions during the day may help to decrease stress within the workplace. The present research asks the questions, does the intervention condition impact performance, and is there a larger reduction in stress after the intervention condition than there is in the controlled condition.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Individuals that participate in the mindfulness meditation will have a higher level of task performance than the participants in the control condition.

Hypothesis 2: Individuals that participate in the mindfulness meditation intervention will have a larger reduction in stress (perceived and physiological) than the participants in the control condition.

CHAPTER II: METHOD

Participants

The present study collected data from 145 students enrolled at Middle Tennessee State University. However, 22 participants were excluded from analyses due to lack of effort and overall in-basket performance ratings. Overall in-basket ratings that were two standard deviations below the mean were excluded from the analyses used for this study. The final sample size for the study was 123 participants. Students that participated in this study were recruited through the university research website (SONA) and received credit to fulfill a course requirement. Additional students were recruited from undergraduate industrial/organizational psychology course and received course credit for participating. Each session took approximately two hours. Participants completed the study in groups. The size of the group was limited by the equipment available for the study as well as the amount of participants that registered and show up for the session. The size of the session group ranged from one to four participants. See Table 1 for the demographics of the sample.

Table 1.

Participant Characteristics

Variable	*N*
Gender	
Male	51
Female	72
Ethnicity	
White	71
Black or African American	40
Asian	1
American Indian/Alaska Native	1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0
Other	1
Age	
18-26	116
27-35	6
36-42	1
Student Status	
Freshmen	60
Sophomore	29
Junior	17
Senior	13
Graduate	0
Other (Non-Traditional)	3

N = 123

Materials

In-basket simulation

The in-basket that was used in this study was an updated version of previously developed materials (Wade, Frame, Kenworthy, & Lopez, 2013). The in-basket asked participants to assume the role of a "recently promoted intern". This in-basket was used

to assess the participants' task performance. The in-basket included nine items that the participants needed to complete in 1 hour. This type of in-basket was chosen to represent a realistic work sample. For example, the participants were expected to respond to specific emails about events that they needed to coordinate. See Appendix B for the in-basket document.

Performance

Performance was measured by assessing the participant's performance in dealing with individual items and combinations of items that relate to specific issues. Performance on each item and issue was measured using a behaviorally anchored rating scale (BARS) specifically designed for this in-basket (Wade et al., 2013). Scores ranged from 1 ("Very Ineffective") to 5 ("Very Effective"), with an option of 0 ("No Action Taken"). Participant performance on the in-basket was rated in terms of the performance dimensions of communication skills, relationship skills, and critical reasoning skills. Participants' performance in terms of general performance across the entirety of the in-basket was also rated using an overall performance scale. Frame of reference training was provided for the 10 research assistants that scored the in-baskets. These assistants were blind to the conditions when rating the in-baskets. To ensure reliable performance ratings, two research assistants rated each in-basket, came to relative consensus on the rating and pre-consensus inter-rater reliability estimates for each rating dyad were computed. See Appendix F for the in-basket rating form.

Interventions

A mindfulness meditation recording was used to implement a relaxation intervention for the experimental group. The participants followed the instructions of a 30-minute mindfulness meditation program. The intervention for participants in the control group consisted of listening to an informational recording on mindfulness meditation. For the present research, participants were randomized by the session they attended.

Blood Pressure Monitors

The SunTech Oscar2 24-HR ABP monitors were used to record the participants' blood pressure throughout the study. During the 2-hour period of time, the participants' blood pressure was recorded every 15 minutes.

Personal Characteristics

To gather information on the participants' characteristics, the participants completed a questionnaire before the in-basket started. Demographics that were collected include age, gender, race, height, weight, and school status. See Appendix D for questionnaire 01.

Perceived Stress

A questionnaire was given to the participants to determine their perceived level of stress and stress associated with their performance during the in-basket task at two different times throughout the study. The questionnaire was given before the intervention, asking participants how they currently feel and then completed by participants after finishing the entire in-basket. The questionnaire was compiled of scales adopted from

Petree (2008). An example of a question that was adopted from Petree (2008) is: "I felt unable to effectively deal with the important issues and problems during the in-basket simulation." The participants answered the questions on a five-point scale (5= *Strongly Agree*, 1=*Strongly Disagree*). Some of the survey items will vary slightly depending upon the administration time (for example, at Time 1 items included phrases like "so far"). See Appendix E for questionnaire 02 and 03.

Procedure

Prior to the study, the participants were sent directions on the location of the study. As the participants arrived, they were seated at their own workstation. Participants were given two consent documents to read and sign, one for the researcher and the other copy for their own records. If there were questions, the researcher provided answers for the participants before they signed the consent form.

After all questions were answered, the researcher provided each participant with a blood pressure monitor. The researcher placed the monitor on their non-dominant arm to begin recording their blood pressure. This provided a baseline measurement. Participants then received instructions for the study. After receiving instructions, participants were asked to complete a paper and pencil questionnaire that collected demographic information. After the participants completed the questionnaire, the researcher provided background information and instructions for the in-basket exercise. Participants were told that they had 60 minutes to work on the in-basket tasks. The participants were given a clock for their workstation to keep track of time.

After 30 minutes, the researcher stopped the participants and handed them questionnaire 02. This questionnaire allowed the participants to report their perceived stress level after the first 30 minutes. After completion, the researcher asked the participants to participate in the intervention (either a 30-minute mindfulness meditation intervention, or a 30-minute informational recording on mindfulness meditation). The manipulation of this variable was whether or not the act of doing mediation, affected their perceived and physiological stress levels. The participants were informed that they needed to return to the in-basket once they completed the intervention.

After the intervention, participants were asked to resume the in-basket exercise. They were given another 30 minutes to work on the nine in-basket tasks. At the 30-minute mark, the researcher distributed questionnaire 03. Once completed, the participants were debriefed on the study. After debriefing, the participants were free to leave. See Appendix G for debriefing document.

CHAPTER III: RESULTS

Hypothesis 1

For hypothesis 1, it was predicted that individuals in the mindfulness meditation condition would have a higher level of in-basket task performance than the participants in the control condition. To test this hypothesis, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. Prior to conducting the analysis, all of the in-baskets were scored by two research assistants. The 10 research assistants were divided into 5 teams, and each team rated approximately 28 in-baskets. The participant's in-basket performance was scored using 9 different ratings including 5 item-related dimensions, communication skills, relationship skills, critical reasoning skills, and overall in-basket performance. See Table 2 for in-basket dimensions and inter-rater reliability correlations.

Table 2.

In-Basket Rater Reliability

	Team 1 $N = 26$	Team 2 $N = 23$	Team 3 $N = 25$	Team 4 $N = 25$	Team 5 $N = 24$	Overall $N = 123$
1. Introduction for guest speaker, Dr. Thornton	.990**	.845**	.951**	.959**	.943**	.932**
2. Budget Issues	.782**	.807**	.839**	.980**	.954**	.864**
3. Interns	.920**	.900**	.989**	.866**	.948**	.919**
4. Reservation	.938**	.985**	.955**	.971**	.945**	.961**
5. Catering	.838**	.948**	.941**	.892**	.940**	.910**
6. Overall Communication Skills	.600**	.775**	.697**	.413*	.476*	.624**
7. Overall Relationship Skills	.660**	.683**	.835**	.594**	.414*	.676**
8. Overall Critical Reasoning Skills	.740**	.715**	.638**	.426*	.853**	.701**
9. Overall In-basket Performance	.785**	.812**	.738**	.491*	.579**	.698**

*Correlations significant at the .05 level
**Correlations significant at the .01 level

The results of the MANOVA indicated that there was not a significant difference in in-basket task performance based on the type of relaxation intervention. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was not supported. See Table 3 for means, standard deviations, and sample sizes.

Table 3.

In-Basket Performance Descriptive Statistics

IB Rating	Condition	*M*	*SD*	*N*
1. Introduction for guest speaker, Dr. Thornton	meditation	2.58	1.67	68
	information	2.10	1.47	55
2. Budget Issues	meditation	2.29	1.58	68
	information	2.14	1.53	55
3. Interns	meditation	2.98	1.27	68
	information	2.75	1.39	55
4. Reservation	meditation	1.48	1.43	68
	information	1.27	1.44	55
5. Catering	meditation	2.13	1.49	68
	information	1.78	1.36	55
6. Overall Communication Skills	meditation	3.68	.98	68
	information	1.78	.80	55
7. Overall Relationship Skills	meditation	3.59	.96	68
	information	3.61	.89	55
8. Overall Critical Reasoning Skills	meditation	2.82	.85	68
	information	2.68	.70	55
9. Overall In-basket Performance	meditation	2.76	.84	68
	information	2.70	.70	55

N = 123

Hypothesis 2

The present study also investigated the effects of meditation on stress. For hypothesis 2, it was predicted that individuals in the mindfulness meditation condition would have a larger reduction in stress (perceived and physiological) than the participants in the control (information only) condition. To test this hypothesis, 3 Repeated Measures MANOVAs were conducted.

To assess participants' perceived stress, a questionnaire was distributed before and after the intervention. To determine which questionnaire items assessed in-basket stress and performance anxiety related to in-basket stress, an exploratory factor analysis with an equamax rotation was completed yielding a two factor solution. Scale reliabilities for each of the two factors were computed. The in-basket stress items had a scale alpha of 0.87 and the items that assess performance anxiety resulting from in-basket stress had a scale alpha of 0.86 See Appendix E for the items that were included in both scales.

The results of the Repeated Measures MANOVA for perceived stress indicated no significant differences in perceived stress based on the type of relaxation intervention. In other words, individuals in the meditation condition did not report lower levels of perceived stress or lower levels of performance anxiety than those in the control condition. See Table 4 for perceived stress means, standard deviations, and sample sizes.

Table 4.

Perceived Stress Descriptive Statistics

Perceived Stress Scales	Condition	*M*	*SD*	*N*
Pre Intervention Stress Scale	meditation	3.02	.75	67
	information	3.02	.98	55
Pre Intervention IB Performance Stress Scale	meditation	3.26	.77	67
	information	3.37	.93	55
Post Intervention Stress Scale	meditation	2.65	.76	67
	information	2.85	.93	55
Post Intervention IB Performance Stress Scale	meditation	3.00	.90	67
	information	3.23	1.05	55

N = 122 (one participant did not complete the perceived stress scales)

To assess participants' physiological stress, two separate MANOVAs were conducted, one for systolic and one for diastolic blood pressure. For each analysis, three systolic or diastolic readings were included (pre, during, and post intervention). These measurements were an average of the readings that were taken before, during, and after the intervention.

The results of the MANOVAs for systolic and diastolic blood pressure indicated that there was no significant different in physiological stress based on the type of relaxation intervention. For example, after the intervention was complete and the participants returned to the in-basket, the blood pressure of the individuals in the meditation condition were not significantly lower than those in the control condition. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was not supported. See Table 5 for means, standard deviations, and sample sizes.

Table 5.

Physiological Stress Descriptive Statistics

Time of Measurement	Condition	*M* SYS	*M* DIA	*SD* SYS	*SD* DIA	*N* SYS	*N* DIA
Pre Intervention	meditation	124.46	72.42	13.98	8.75	63	63
	information	125.23	70.72	19.95	8.70	52	52
Intervention	meditation	123.78	76.31	13.83	38.55	63	63
	information	123.54	70.28	13.97	7.93	52	52
Post Intervention	meditation	125.51	73.52	13.46	9.63	63	63
	information	126.40	72.79	25.78	10.52	52	52

Note. $N = 115$ due to missing blood pressure readings

To investigate the relationship between perceived and physiological stress, correlations were computed for the pre and post intervention measures of stress. The results of this analysis portrayed that there is a difference between what an individual reports on paper and how their body is actually responding to stress (i.e., blood pressure). See Table 6 for perceived and physiological stress correlations.

Table 6.

Perceived & Physiological Stress Correlations

	Pre Intervention SYS	Pre Intervention DIA	Post Intervention SYS	Post Intervention DIA
Pre Intervention Stress Scale	-.147	-.132	-.300**	-.257**
Pre Intervention IB Performance Stress Scale	-.155	-.186*	-.353**	-.310**
Post Intervention Stress Scale	-.127	-.199*	-.236*	-.209*
Post Intervention IB Performance Stress Scale	-.108	-.180*	-.219*	-.202*

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level
*Correlation is significant at the .05 level

It was possible that the lack of significant findings were a result of removing poor performers during the data cleaning process. To test for the aforementioned possibility, all analyses were completed a second time using all data points (including those that were removed for the analyses presented above). Results for the second set of analyses were consistent with the results presented above.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION

Overall Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of relaxation techniques on stress and task performance. While the research did not yield results that supported the hypotheses, some conclusions were found that align and contribute to the research of stress, relaxation interventions, and performance. The overall findings are discussed below.

For this study, hypothesis 1, "Individuals that participate in mindfulness mediation will have a higher level of task performance than the participants in the control condition," was not supported by the results. The analyses indicated that there was not a significant difference in task performance between the two conditions (mindfulness meditation and an informational recording on mindfulness meditation). While this finding was surprising, this marks a significant milestone for further investigation of the relationship between relaxation interventions and task performance.

Along with hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2, "Individuals that participate in the mindfulness meditation intervention will have a larger reduction in stress (perceived and physiological) than the participants in the control condition," was not supported by the results of the analyses. In the past, researchers have found that long (i.e., 8-week) intervention programs such as meditation or yoga, have positively affected self-report measures of stress and psychological and physiological consequences related to stress and anxiety (Geary & Rosenthal, 2011; Sharma & Rush, 2014). The present study sought to determine if one relaxation session had a significant impact on an individual's stress

level. Based on the results of the present study one could assert that one session of meditation may not be enough to have an impact on an individual's level of stress.

Furthermore, the findings of this study support previous conclusions that relate to the accuracy of self-report measures of stress. In the past, it has been reported that self-report measures lack the ability to accurately represent an individual's stress level (Sulsky & Smith, 2005). After examining physiological and self-report measures of stress in this study, the results support the notion that there is a difference between what an individual reports on paper and how their body is actually responding to stress (i.e., blood pressure).

Limitations and Future Research

For the present study, there are a variety of limitations that exist. In particular, the simulation and participant sample are two limitations. Because 75% of the participants that made up the sample were under the age of 21, they may not have had an extensive amount of work experience. Therefore, the participants may have found it hard to relate to the type of tasks that were presented in the in-basket simulation. For example, these particular college students may not have experience with event coordinating tasks. Furthermore, the work sample may not have provoked the same amount of stress because the consequences of failure are not as meaningful as they are in real life situations.

In addition to the type of simulation and participant sample, the length of the in-basket is also seen as a limitation. Because the study was only two hours long, a work sample cannot accurately represent a full day's work. The level of stress initiated during the simulation may be less than what would occur during an 8-hour workday.

These findings and limitations do provide for some suggestions for future research. Because performance differences were observed for all participants in the meditation and control condition, it is recommended that future research investigate whether or not the type of intervention is responsible for the differences in stress and performance, or if it is just because they took a break during a stressful task. It is recommended that future research includes a condition that does not incorporate a break for a relaxation intervention.

Along with the previous recommendation, it is suggested that researchers further investigate the timing and duration of a relaxation intervention. Specifically, research should further investigate the quantity and frequency of relaxation intervention sessions to understand when the intervention starts to have a significant effect on stress and performance. Future research in this area could help individuals determine how long and how frequently they need to incorporate relaxation interventions into their daily work routine.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that individuals should not expect to see differences in their stress and performance levels after participating in one mindfulness meditation session. Based on these findings and previous research, this type of intervention should be incorporated into one's daily routine over a period of time. As organizations continue to implement and incorporate wellness programs and relaxation interventions into their culture, research must continue to investigate the type of intervention needed to positively impact the well-being and performance of individuals in

the workplace. Because stress can be detrimental to the health and performance of an individual, further research in this area will continue to help organizations understand and train their employees on how to handle and cope with the daily stressors that occur in the workplace.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter

11/24/2014

Investigator(s): Meagan E. Ferguson, faculty advisor, Mark Frame
Department: Psychology
Investigator(s) Email: mef4k@mtmail.mtsu.edu, faculty advisor: mark.frame@mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: "An Experimental Investigation of the Impact of Relaxation Techniques on Stress andTask Performance "

Protocol Number: 15-122

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above. The MTSU IRB or its representative has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants and qualifies for an expedited review under 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110, and you have satisfactorily addressed all of the points brought up during the review.

Approval is granted for one (1) year from the date of this letter for 200 participants.

Please note that any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918. Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

You will need to submit an end-of-project form to the Office of Compliance upon completion of your research located on the IRB website. Complete research means that you have finished collecting and analyzing data. **Should you not finish your research within the one (1) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a continuation prior to the expiration date.** Please allow time for review and requested revisions. Failure to submit a Progress Report and request for continuation will automatically result in cancellation of your research study. Therefore, you will not be able to use any data and/or collect any data. Your study expires 11/26/2015.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to complete the required training. **If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers to the Office of Compliance before they begin to work on the project.**

All research materials must be retained by the PI or faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion and then destroyed in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity.

Sincerely,

Kellie Hilker
Institutional Review Board Member
Middle Tennessee State University

Appendix B: SportsDome International (SDI) Music-City Arena In-Basket

(Participant Materials)

SportsDome International (SDI)
Music City Arena
Participant Materials

SportsDome

Providing professional ownership and management to administer, operate, market and maintain facilities for the presentation and enjoyment of events involving entertainment, education, culture, sports,

International

Company Information

SportsDome International is the nation's leader in facility ownership, management, marketing and development. SportsDome International combines recognized industry leadership and management expertise with more than 30 years experience in successful facility ownership and management to provide the finest services, the greatest entertainment, and the most positive customer experience for the buildings we manage across the United States and Canada.

SportsDome International owns and manages Stadiums, Arenas, and Convention Centers all over the United States and Canada. We provide top-notch booking, marketing and sales, construction and operations consultation and operations development. SportsDome International has a vast array of clients and each benefits from SportsDome International's unique combination of industry experience, national presence, and extensive resources to draw upon to ensure the success of their facilities.

Mission Statement
"*Providing professional ownership and management to administer, operate, market, and maintain facilities for the presentation and enjoyment of events involving entertainment, education, culture, sports, and conventions*."

History
SportsDome International, the nation's leader in venue ownership, management, marketing and development, was founded in 1976 with the management of their first facility, the Dallas Dome. SportsDome International soon grew to manage convention centers, trade centers, arenas, and stadiums. SportsDome International's clients benefit from the company's depth of resources and its unparalleled expertise, leadership, and creative problem-solving. Their successful growth has been built on the many partnerships, relationships, and resources they have developed with their clients — both municipal and private. This unique combination of resources, relationships, and expertise has allowed SportsDome International to define and refine the industry throughout its history.

SportsDome International ownership and team of dedicated corporate support personnel make them unrivalled in the field of private facility ownership and management. SportsDome International is a joint venture in general partnership form with two equal principals: The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company and Canteen Corporation.

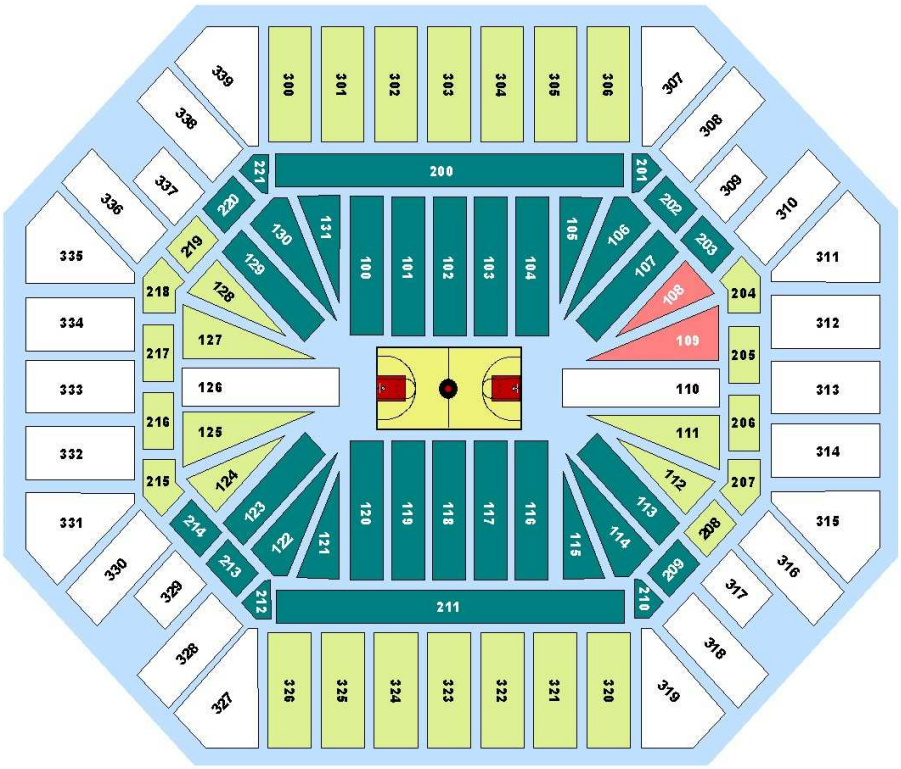
History at a glance

- 1976 SportsDome - USA is founded when they take over management responsibilities of their first facility, the Dallas Dome
- 1977 Patrick Erickson is named CEO of SportsDome - USA
- 1980 SportsDome - USA purchases their first pre-existing facility, the Pittsburg Arena
- 1984 SportsDome - USA builds and begins operating the Centroplex in Orlando, FL
- 1985 SportsDome - USA purchases The Dallas Dome and continues to operate and manage the facility
- 1991 Patrick Erickson retires and Christopher Lewis is named CEO
- 1994 SportsDome - USA becomes SportsDome International with the purchase of their first facility in Canada, the Montreal Dome
- 1995 SportsDome International purchases their second facility in Canada, the Maple Leaf Arena, located in Toronto
- 1997 SportsDome International launches an internet site SportsDome International.com
- 2000 SportsDome International partners with the Hyton Hotel Company and Canteen Corporation
- 2002 SportsDome International is voted the Nation's Number One Arena Management Company by Stadium and Arena Management Magazine
- 2003 SportsDome International opens The Desert Dome in Tempe, Arizona
- 2004 SportsDome International opens the Mississippi Arena, in Biloxi
- 2006 SportsDome International celebrates its 30-year anniversary
- 2011 SportsDome International celebrates 35-years and opens their newest facility, the Music City Arena, in Nashville, TN
-
- ***SportsDome International owns and manages locations in the following cities:***

Dallas, TX
Pittsburgh, PA
Orlando, FL
Montreal, Canada
Toronto, Canada
Tempe, AZ
Biloxi, MS
Nashville, TN

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

MUSIC-CITY ARENA

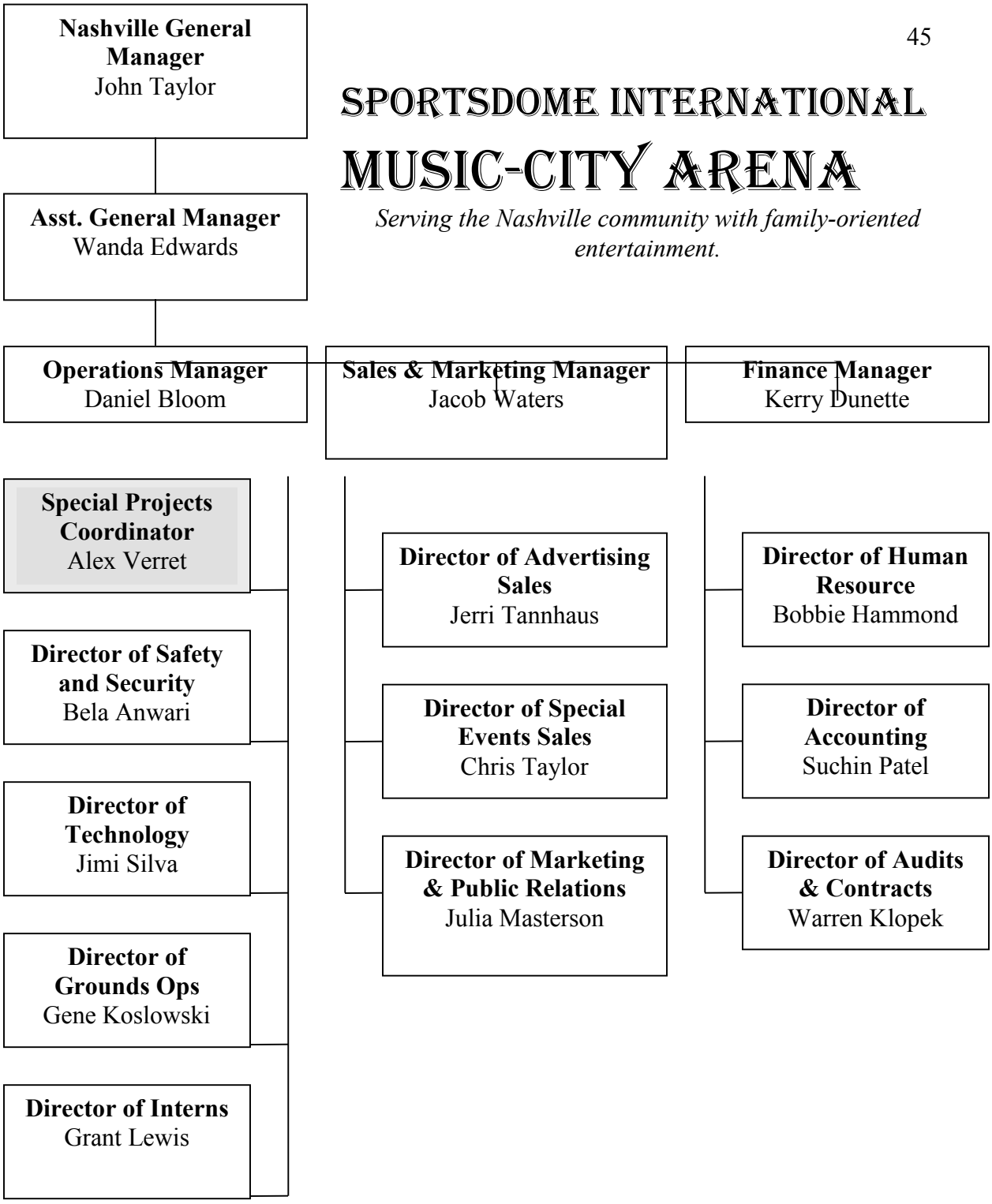


MAIN
PARKING LOT

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

MUSIC-CITY ARENA

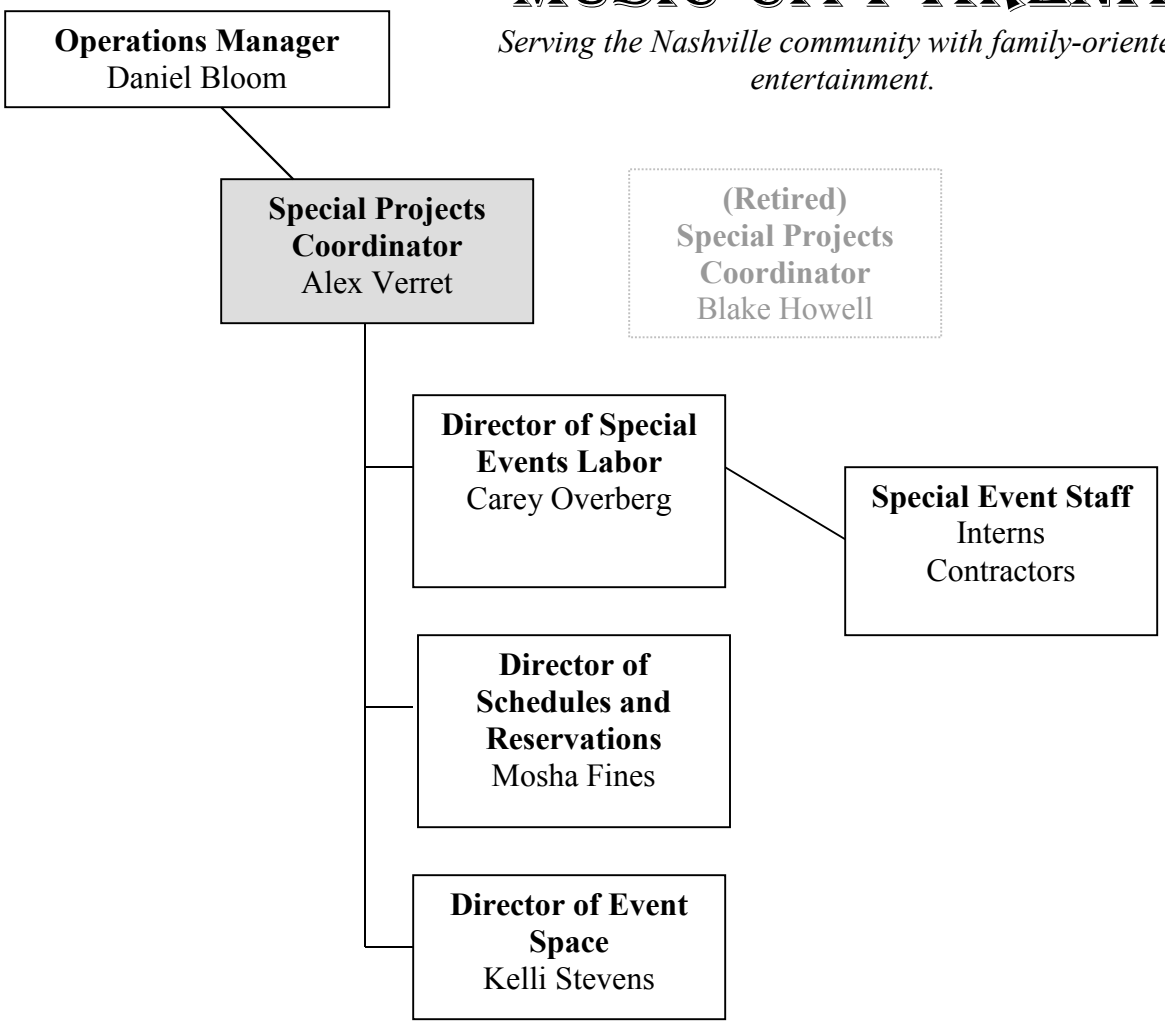
Serving the Nashville community with family-oriented entertainment.



SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

MUSIC-CITY ARENA

Serving the Nashville community with family-oriented entertainment.



MUSIC-CITY ARENA

Serving the Nashville community with family-oriented entertainment.

Job Description for Special Projects Coordinator for Music-City Arena

Purpose:
Works with limited supervision to coordinate, assist in, and direct operations designed to host a safe, compelling, and successful event at Music-City Arena and all SportsDome International locations.

Duties, Functions and Responsibilities:
Essential duties and functions - pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, the job of Special Projects Coordinator for Music-City Arena may include the following (other related duties may be assigned):

1. Confirm presence and activities of scheduled events at assigned sites.
2. Identify and notify replacement volunteers and personnel to assume vacant assignments.
3. Perform the duties of others when necessary.
4. Provide direction and training to volunteers and contract employees as needed to accomplish service goals.
5. Review conference site documentation, contracts, reservations, and reviews.
6. Provide periodic reports to management regarding site activities, guest speakers, and identifying needed action.
7. Work outside scheduled hours to ensure consistent quality, attend special events as appropriate to meet the needs of the special event and to exemplify Music-City Arena service.
8. Assume on-call duty as assigned, responding to event needs and reporting to duty as necessary.

Responsibilities - Supervision and/or Leadership Exercised:
The employee of this position is required to perform all the necessary tasks as they relate to scheduling, coordinating, delegating work, training and managing the flow of work for the event, and all around hosting a smoothly executed event experience.

1. The incumbent will be responsible for 3 full-time employees and a limited number of contract employees and interns, and an unlimited number of volunteer personnel
2. Identify and notify replacement personnel to assume vacant assignments.

3. Provide direction and training to full and contract employees as needed to accomplish service goals.
4. Monitor employee performance, attendance and document for use in evaluations.
5. Review site documentation, activity, reservations, and confirmations.
6. Monitor welfare of personnel working after-hour and off-duty assignments.
7. Stay informed of the purpose of the event including who and what the organization and event represents.
8. Work outside scheduled hours to ensure consistent coverage, attend training classes, meetings and other activities as needed to meet the business needs of the organization and the workgroup.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities:
Must possess required knowledge, skills, abilities and experience and be able to explain and demonstrate, with or without reasonable accommodations, that the essential functions of the job can be performed.

- Knowledge of or an ability to learn all safety practices related to working in large areas with many people and other stadium specific environments and other safety practices, procedures and regulations, which contribute to a safe work place.
- Knowledge of or an ability to learn SportsDome International policies and procedures.
- Ability to train others.
- Ability to lead and motivate others in improved work practices.
- Ability to analyze irregular events and respond to critical situations.
- Skill in communications, both written and verbal in order to communicate with all, but not limited to, the following: full- and part-time personnel, special events constituencies, customers, and supervisors.
- Ability to utilize most computer applications, including Word, Excel, Power Point and special coordinating applications.
- Ability to analyze and strictly adhere to a budget.

Minimum Qualifications
Education and/or Equivalent Experience:

- High School Diploma or GED.
- At least 1 year of work related experience
- 2 letters of recommendation

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

January

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

February

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	

March

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

May

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

June

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

July

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

August

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL
December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	**3** **Today**	4	5	6
7	8	9	**10** **SPA Conference**	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

In-Basket Simulation

Participant Materials

In-Basket Instructions

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL VERY CAREFULLY.

In this simulation, you are Alex Verret, the recently promoted Special Projects Coordinator for SportsDome International (SDI). Until now, you have been interning at the Tempe, AZ location. After you graduated this last December, SDI made you an offer that relocated you to the Music-City Arena location. Your job oversees all the planning and coordinating that goes along with hosting large events. Your predecessor, Blake Howell, recently had to step down from his position due to poor performance during the previous two years at SDI.

Today is Wednesday December 3rd, and it is your first official day on the job. You have come to the office to take care of matters requiring your attention before you leave for a mandatory trip to headquarters for orientation and training. You will be gone until Saturday evening, December 6th. Your first event will take place on Wednesday, December 10th and will be a large national conference. You will be in charge of coordinating and hosting the 50th annual National Sports Psychology Association (SPA) Conference taking place on Wednesday, December 10th. There will be roughly 500 members of SPA (Student, Academic, Athletic, and Practitioner) in attendance. You must leave your office in exactly 60 minutes (1 hour) to catch a bus. **This is a mandatory, required trip; you cannot miss this orientation and training.** You will be unable to work on any of these materials while you are away. Therefore, any decisions that you consider important must be handled in an appropriate manner.

You have two previously scheduled very important meetings that cannot be canceled. During the time before, after, and in between these meetings you will work on the materials in this folder. Pay close attention to items that have pressing time and priority issues. Dates may help determine your priorities since time is an important factor. Your responses must be written on the blank response forms provided.

Remember that SPA is a national association. You interact with students, professors, athletics, and professionals (practitioners) alike. You also have meetings and communications with heads and directors of the other departments within SDI. Clear and frequent communication with these people is a key component of your job and is essential to the success of your department. Use this information to guide you in your responses.

During the last couple of months, Blake Howell was unable to handle all of his administrative responsibilities as he was furiously trying to salvage his job. So, a number of issues need to be handled immediately. Please read through the entire packet of information before you begin responding to the items. Prioritize and handle issues as you would on the job. Try to handle as many things as you can before you leave for the trip; some tasks may need to be delegated to other members of your team. Keep in mind that you may not be able to take action on all tasks. You need to recognize that some tasks are more important than others. Deal with higher priority issues before those with lower priority.

We must ask you to limit your communication with others to written voice-mails, written messages, written e-mail, written memos, written notes, and written letters. You can set up meetings for when you return from your trip. If you do this, be sure to write out agendas for these meetings so that it is clear what you intend to accomplish in these meetings.

In-Basket Instructions (continued)

As you respond to the items, be specific about what you want to accomplish. Be sure to provide enough information so the assessors will understand what it is you plan to do and accomplish.

****For example**, if an item was about registration:

To: Kelli Stevens, Director of Event Space; Jamie Lighthouse, Director of Schedules and Reservations; and Carey Overberg, Director of Special Events Labor

From: Alex Verret, Special Projects Coordinator

Date: December 3

Subject: Registration Update

Registration for the conference will now be available at two times, 6:00-8:00 pm Tuesday December 9th, as well as on the day of the conference, December 10th, from 8:00 to 10:00 am. The location will remain the Alex for both times. We will need extra volunteers for the new Tuesday evening registration time.

(One response might be…)

Post and distribute.

(A more complete response would be…)

Send out mass email to members for help in recruiting more volunteers.

(An even more complete response might be…)

Post and read at briefing, provide copies. Send out mass email to recruit more volunteers. Provide a sign up sheet for both registration times to make sure all positions are filled. Confirm responses.

Notice that although the first response, ***"Post and distribute,"*** may be an appropriate action, it is not a complete response. This type of response does not provide detailed information about how you intend to deal with the memo. The questions arise: Post where? Distribute to…? Will everyone see it? What should these members and volunteers do when they read it? As you can see, the other responses provide a more complete picture of what will be done to handle this issue.

At the close of the sixty-minute period, the administrator will remind you that you must leave the office and will collect all of the materials associated with the IN-BOX (including any notes you took).

Summation:

- You have sixty minutes to complete this simulation.
- Read through all of the materials before you take action.
- Pay close attention to the items that are most pressing in time and priority.
- Take action on items *in writing*. Be very specific about what you plan to do.
- Write on the blank response forms provided.

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

MEMO

TO: Alex Verret, Special Projects Coordinator

FROM: Daniel Bloom, Operations Manager

DATE: Wednesday, December 3rd

SUBJECT: **Welcome** Item 01

Alex, Welcome to SportsDome International, Music-City Arena (MCA). Although I haven't had the pleasure of having any correspondence with you before, I have heard wonderful things about your work and interests from your previous supervisor.

I am sorry I can't be there to greet you in person. I hope you are as happy to be here as we are to have you. I know you will enjoy working here as much as I have. We want you to know how valuable your services are, especially in this time when the year is just getting started and the 50th annual national Sports Psychology Association conference is only a week away. I also want you to feel comfortable asking for clarification and/or assistance during this serious crunch time. SDI is constantly growing and evolving, and with an organization of this size, open and frequent communications are mandatory to keep this operation running smoothly.

Today, December 3rd, you have two important meetings. One will be with Julia Masterson, Public Relations. This meeting concerns one of the scheduled guest speakers for the conference. To prepare for the meeting, I have given you a file marked Dr. Thornton. The other meeting will be with Suchin Patel concerning details of your budget for the conference. Both of these meetings are very important and cannot be postponed. You must address both of these matters before you leave the office today.

In addition, there are a number of memos and messages which require your immediate attention and response. Please attend to all of these matters within the hour because you have to catch a flight this afternoon to go to orientation. Thank you in advance for your efforts.

I know this is a great deal to ask of you on your first day; there is much to do and not much time to do it, but I have full confidence in your abilities to tend to these matters efficiently and effectively. I also know it will take time to get to know all the people you will be working with. It may be difficult to meet for the first time under these stressful circumstances, but at SDI we have a climate of respect and positivity.

I am available to assist you as you adjust to your new surroundings. Blake Howell was in the midst of tending to hotel and food accommodations for the conference when he had to step down as Special Projects Coordinator. He will be available to assist you through e-mail for the next two months.

Once again, thank you for everything concerning this upcoming week's conference. And again, welcome to SDI-MCA. I am looking forward to working with you. I know you will do a great job.

Sincerely,
Daniel Bloom
Operations Manager

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

MEMO

TO: Alex Verret, Special Projects Coordinator

FROM: Blake Howell

DATE: December 3rd

SUBJECT: **Works in Progress** Item 02

My best wishes to you as you assume your new duties. I enjoyed every moment I spent at SDI, we really threw some great events. I'm sure you will as well. You simply will not find a better group of people to work with.

I tried to finish everything before I left, but I wasn't able to complete three important things.

The Celebrity Guest Speaker - Scheduled for December 10. We are expecting a large crowd, so you will probably need every contract worker, full-time/part-time employee and volunteer (on both day and night crews) in addition to using some of our budget on security personnel. This is a very important high profile event for Sports Psychology Association (SPA) considering some of the athletes that will be in attendance. It is SPA's 50th anniversary after all, and everyone is expecting greatness. The day crew schedule is complete, but the night crew schedules still need work. These need to be completed and posted by Monday, December 8th. I would also suggest having a strategic meeting for this event. Your coworkers are a very skilled bunch, but I still like to cover all the bases for an event of this magnitude.

1. **Celebrity Accommodations** – Typically it is the athletes who I struggle to accommodate, but this is not the case for this conference. The celebrity is a well-known psychologist who has his own sports talk show, and became famous after being a guest psychologist on a well-known and very popular afternoon sports show on ESPN. I have received two emails from our celebrity's rep requesting premiere accommodations. Our celebrity (Dr. Thornton, leading Sports Psychology expert) will be staying two nights (Tuesday and Wednesday) and currently has reservations at the new Ritz Carlton in Nashville for a luxury suite. These reservations have yet to be confirmed by the Ritz, but you should expect one anytime now. Jerri Tannhaus, Daniel Bloom, Chris Taylor, and you will be having dinner with our celebrity on Tuesday evening. You will need to make these dinner reservations soon.
2. **Celebrity Introductions** - This is the most pressing matter. You are in charge of introducing our celebrity speaker at the conference. I have attached the information you will need to do this. Sorry this is so last minute, but Julia Masterson wants to go over your draft of your introduction with you today. This is the biggest *non-athlete* guest speaker we have ever had, and we hope it brings recognition and attention to using our accommodations for more than just sporting events but other conferences and local events as well. This would really pull Music-City Arena to the forefront of the other SDI locations.
3. **You have a great crew to work with and Carey Overberg, Mosha Fines, Julia Masterson, and Kelli Stevens will be doing their best to make this conference smooth for you and them. Again, best wishes to you.**

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

MEMO

Celebrity Guest Speaker Background

Bio ----December 1st Item 2a

Dr. Thornton has encouraged millions of people to confront their own behavior and move forward in their lives. His syndicated, daily one-hour series is the second highest rated daytime sports talk show in the nation. The show has been making headlines and breaking records since its July 2000 launch, when it garnered the highest ratings of any new syndicated show ever.

Now in the seventh season of his series, Dr. Thornton's success stems from his charismatic approach to helping his celebrity athletes solve their problems, stripping through their emotional clutter, getting them "back in the game, on *and* off the field". Dr. Thornton champions those who suffer from such silent epidemics as performance anxiety, steroid abuse/addiction, "game-day depression", and other health issues that are prevalent in society, but go largely undiscussed by their victims.

In the popular media, Dr. Thornton is author of six #1 *New York Times* bestsellers. His books have been published in 32 languages with over 22 million copies in print.

In the academic arena, Dr. Thornton is also well revered and respected. He has published over 57 studies in various peer reviewed journals on a variety of topics in the area of Sports Psychology. Some of his recent interests include but are not limited to: Stress response cycles, Stress management, Crisis management, Stress tolerance, Psychological disorders, and Pain therapy.

Famous for giving exciting lectures and being a contributor to breaking psychological research, Dr. Thornton will be attending the 50th annual National SPA conference in Nashville, TN in December of this year. His topic will challenge psychologists to think multicultural for the next few years, bringing athletic psychological awareness to global issues and patterns.

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

Email

TO: Blake Howell, Special Projects Coordinator

FROM: Suchin Patel, Accounting

DATE: November 25th

SUBJECT: **Good Job on staying within budget** Item 03

Dear Blake,

You and your team have done a wonderful job of staying within the budget in planning this year's conference. Thank you. I have attached the report so you can look over it. There are just a couple of questions I have regarding the Conference expenses. First of all, I notice that there has been no deposit paid or money requested for food for the Conference. I thought we contracted with SPA to provide a brunch for members attending the morning of the Conference. I would appreciate it if you could review the attached document and help me understand some of these holes. I know we will be meeting later this afternoon, but if you don't mind, prior to our meeting could you shoot me an email with the missing catering expense and who we are planning on using.

Thank you again. Your effort and help are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Suchin Patel
Accounting

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL SPA

Conference Expense Report

Item 3a

March 31st – November 24th

Report Prepared for: Blake Howell

Description	Deposit	Total Expense	Running Total
BEGINNING BUDGET	26,000.00		
Hotel Accommodations		765.00	765.00
Ritz Carlton x 3 nights		255/night	
Conference Rooms		6,000	6,750.00
Trophy Hall		2,000	
Blue Room		1,000	
Joseph P. Daniels Hall		3,000	
Food & Beverage		2,100	8,850.00
Caterer		?	
Drinks		800.00	
50th Anniversary Cake		800.00	
Plates/utensils/cups/etc.		500.00	
Advertising		8,000	16,850.00
Mailed Conference Schedule/booklets		3,000	
Conference Welcome Packet		3,000	
Decorations		2,750	19,600.00
Conference Posters		1,000	
Conference Souvenirs		1,250	
Autographed Photos		500	
Paid Contract Workers		4,000	23,600.00
Security		1,000	
Cleaning Crew		750	
Contract employees		1,150	
Interns		1,100	

Remaining Balance: $2,400.00

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

Email

TO: Alex Verret, Special Projects Coordinator

FROM: Grant Lewis, Director of Interns

DATE: December 3nd

SUBJECT: **New Policies and Procedures Training** Item 04

Dear Alex,

This is a follow-up to a memo about the new policies and procedures in reference to the hours permitted to use interns. There seems to be an issue with the interns/students who have been working with you in preparation for the conference. I have been receiving complaints by some of the professors which we recruited our interns about the amount of time we expect our interns to work. Some professors have been complaining about their students not attending class and missing assignments and tests. I know the conference is soon, but the kid's semester just began and this is not a good impression for us to be making when we are in desperate need of them next week. You need to make sure that your interns are attending their classes and turning in all assignments. We don't want to lose any of our personnel due to slipping GPA's and/or angry professors. We need the support of the entire organization in order to pull this conference off in light of Blake's quick departure. Get your team in line, and make it work.
I have attached one of the complaints I have been receiving. Please review and attend to it immediately.

Thanks,
Grant

Grant Lewis
Director of Interns

Valmont University

Email

TO: Grant Lewis, Director of Interns

FROM: Natalie Duncan, Professor of Life Sciences, Valmont University

DATE: December 1st

SUBJECT: **Regarding SPA students this Semester** Item 04a

Dear Grant,

I know you and the rest of the SDI organization is under immense pressure right now due to the big conference coming up next week. But unfortunately I have noticed some troublesome behavior. Since the beginning of the semester only 3 weeks ago, students who are interning at SDI in my classes are regularly not attending my lectures or turning in assignments. In fact, just last Friday I administered the first test of the semester. I usually have a couple of students miss my tests, but this number has leaped from last semester to this semester. I did a quick review and all but a couple of SDI students missed my exam.

Needless to say I am not pleased with this. I am aware of the complimentary relationship that our university has with your organization. I am also aware of the number of recruits your organization gets from our programs that have been tailored to your needs. And finally I know the University's policy regarding academic standing in order to participate in such events like the conference and participate in internships like SDI. I hate to sound so harsh, but I believe that my student's academic success is my responsibility once they register for my class. After all you will not hire on my interns if they do not graduate and they will not graduate at the current level of performance. This being said, if I am not aware of any action taken to make up for the last few weeks, I will offer two choices to my students: They can either take a failing grade for everything they have missed up to this point (giving each of them a possibility of earning a "D" assuming perfect scores on every assignment from now until the end of the semester) or I will notify the administration and prevent these students from working the SPA conference and instead join me for a day of tutorials. I feel as though I am being more than generous.

Please be sure to notify me of any suggestions regarding this issue.

Thanks,

Natalie Duncan, PhD
Professor of Life Sciences
Valmont University

Ritz-Carlton Nashville

Email

TO: Alex Verret, Special Projects Coordinator

FROM: Ritz Carlton Reservations

DATE: December 3rd

SUBJECT: **Reservation Confirmation for December 12-14** Item 05

Dear Alex,

This email is to confirm your reservations for Guest Speaker, Dr. Patrick Thornton for the following dates:

Date: December 12, 13, & 14
Room: Standard Room with Downtown City view
Non Smoking, Queen Size bed
Cost: $255.00 per night
Total: $765.00 plus tax and gratuities

If any changes need to be made, please contact me, Steven Phillips, at <Steven.Phillips@RC.com>. We look forward to your stay with us here in Nashville.

Sincerely,

Steven Phillips
Reservation Services
Ritz Carlton

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

Email

TO:	Blake Howell, Special Projects Coordinator	
FROM:	Mosha Fines, Director of Schedules and Reservations	
DATE:	November 28th	
SUBJECT:	Spice & Dice Confirmation	Item 06

Blake,

We have just received confirmation from Spice & Dice about catering our luncheon during our conference. They will be serving a selection of their freshest appetizers along with a full spread for brunch. They assure me it will be more than enough food. We got a great price too. Everywhere else we looked quoted $5,000.00 and up for the event. Spice & Dice is only charging $2,000.00! I cannot believe we will be feeding between 200-250 people who are attending this lecture. On that note, I am back to work.

Talk to you soon.
Mosha

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

Email

TO: Alex Verret, Special Projects Coordinator
FROM: Julia Masterson, Public Relations
DATE: December 3rd
SUBJECT: **Speaker Introduction** Item 07

Hey Alex,
I am happy that we finally have somebody selected for your position. I have been getting worried about who would be introducing our guest speaker. Anyway, I was hoping we could get together to review your introduction for him. If you wouldn't mind, could you send me what you are planning on saying? I don't mean to micromanage, but as the director of Public Relations, my job is on the line if something goes wrong here, and I refuse to let that happen. Needless to say, I am expecting this introduction to go off without a hitch… you know how sensitive celebrities can be.

Thanks for your help.

Julia

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

Email

TO: Blake Howell, Special Projects Coordinator

FROM: Warren Klopek, Director of Audits and Contracts

DATE: December 1st

SUBJECT: **Boro-Food WEB article** Item 08

Dear Blake,

Didn't you contact these guys about the conference? If we contracted with them and our guests become ill we could have major problems on our hands. Because this is now public knowledge our legal counsel says we would be liable for medical expenses and pain and suffering.

Take care of this immediately,

Warren Klopek

Director of Audits and Contracts

Boro-Food WEB Update

News for the week of November 30th, 2014

Spice & Dice Makes People Weak and Sick

Item 08a

In this our last edition of the before the holiday season, we have uncovered a story that is sure to shock the local Murfreesboro community. The catering company Spice & Dice has recently come into question by local organizations. Known for their delicious creations, Spice & Dice has marketed themselves to local organizations, wedding planners, and hotels within the Nashville area. They gained some momentum originally by advertising using only the freshest ingredients.

Just recently Spice & Dice was deluged by a number of complaints concerning the quality of their food. Apparently guests attending events in which Spice & Dice was catering were making frequent trips to the hospital for serious dehydration experienced with severe bouts of food poisoning.

When phoned to respond to allegations of serving food that was ill-prepared, a spokesperson for Spice & Dice vehemently denied allegations. This, of course comes as no surprise to our seasoned investigators here at Boro-Food WEB.

Hospital representatives have been in contact with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about these issues. Apparently Spice & Dice was using a preservative in their dishes in order to maintain an appearance of freshness when clearly they were not keeping standards of actual freshness.

Executive Chef, Michael Doss, of French restaurant *TréEat* states," It is extremely difficult as an up and coming caterer to make a food budget and stick with it. Like any business, it takes time and money to start a company from scratch. The key is to not cut corners and that seems to be the case here." Chef Doss also notes that it is completely acceptable to request a list of ingredients. Anyone in the food industry must be able to provide this list to all who request in case of potential allergens.

So the next time you are planning an event in this area, be sure and ask to see their list of ingredients they will be using in preparing the menu for the event. Also look for experience and positive recommendations/reputations. Bon Appetite!

- Lynn McPherson, Boro-Food WEB Investigator

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL

Email

TO: Blake Howell, Special Projects Coordinator
FROM: John Taylor, Nashville General Manager
DATE: November 26th
SUBJECT: **Spice & Dice** Item 09

Hi there Blake-

I noticed on the budget for the SPA event next month that a catering company hasn't been selected for the conference. I just happen to be the uncle of a wonderful young man who has a catering company. His company is Spice & Dice and they are a local favorite. Because they are starting out and because I have a close tie, I think it would sure be nice to pass some business on their way. Plus, my nephew said we would get a discount in exchange for some advertising during the conference. He mentioned a ballpark figure of $2,000-$2,500. I don't know much about catering, but this seems like a great deal!

Isn't it great when things seem to just work themselves out?

Thanks for your help, and I am sure my nephew will thank you too!

John
Nashville General Manager

Appendix C: Participant Response Form

SPORTSDOME INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC-CITY ARENA

☐ **Memo** ☐ **Note** ☐ **Voicemail** ☐ **E-mail**

☐ **Letter** ☐ **Schedule Meeting** **Item(s) _____**

TO:
FROM:
CC:
BCC:
DATE:
SUBJECT:

Appendix D: Questionnaire 01

Questionnaire 01

1. Which of the following best describes your status?
   - ☐ Freshmen
   - ☐ Sophomore
   - ☐ Junior
   - ☐ Senior
   - ☐ Graduate
   - ☐ Other (please specify _____)

2. Age (in years) _____

3. Height (in feet and inches) _____

4. Weight (pounds) _____

5. Which of the following best describes you? ☐ Male ☐ Female

6. Which of the following best describes your ethnicity?
   - ☐ White
   - ☐ Black or African American
   - ☐ Asian
   - ☐ American Indian/Alaska Native
   - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
   - ☐ Other (please specify_____)

Appendix E: Questionnaire 02 and Questionnaire 03

Questionnaire 02

*Below are several statements pertaining to your feelings and thoughts about the **in-basket simulation** you just completed. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and we ask that you treat each one as a separate question. Using the scale to the right, mark the one circle that best represents your level of agreement to each of the following statements:*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
*1. I feel unable to effectively deal with the important issues and problems during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+*2. I feel nervous and stressed during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*3. I feel that I am effectively coping during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*4. I feel that things are not going my way during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+*5. I feel unable to do everything I want to do during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*6. I feel that I am on top of things during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The in-basket simulation creates situations that are outside of my control.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I am able to control the way I spend my time during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*9. The in-basket simulation is stressful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+10. The amount of items given to me is interfering with my performance on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+11. I did not have enough time to do a good job on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+12. There are too many items on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I only care about getting my research credits.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+14. I could perform better if there was less work to do during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Thirty minutes was too much time for the first half of the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. I am bored during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The in-basket simulation is a good use of my time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I am actively involved during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. I am working to the best of my ability on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I care about my performance on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. I would be interested in reading about the results of the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. The work I've done during the in-basket simulation is important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*Included as an item in the in-basket stress scale
+Included as an item in the performance anxiety related to in-basket stress scale

Questionnaire 03

*Below are several statements pertaining to your feelings and thoughts about the **in-basket simulation** you just completed. Although some of the questions are similar, there are differences between them and we ask that you treat each one as a separate question. Using the scale to the right, mark the one circle that best represents your level of agreement to each of the following statements:*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
*1. I felt unable to effectively deal with the important issues and problems during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+*2. I felt nervous and stressed during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*3. I felt that I effectively coped during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*4. I felt that things did not go my way during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+*5. I felt unable to do everything I wanted to do during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*6. I felt that I was on top of things during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. The in-basket simulation created situations that were outside of my control.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I was able to control the way I spent my time during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
*9. The in-basket simulation was stressful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+10. The amount of items given to me interfered with my performance on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+11. I did not have enough time to do a good job on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+12. There were too many items on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I only care about getting my research credits.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
+14. I could have performed better if there had been less work to do during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. One hour was too much time for the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. I was bored during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The in-basket simulation was a good use of my time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I was actively involved during the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. I worked to the best of my abilities on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. I care about my performance on the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. I would be interested in reading about the results of the in-basket simulation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. The work I did during the in-basket simulation is important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

*Included as an item in the in-basket stress scale
+Included as an item in the performance anxiety related to in-basket stress scale

Appendix F: Rating Form

RATING FORM

SportsDome International

Alex Verret

SCORING FORM

Scored by: _____
(your name)

Participant ID number: _____
(ex. 1CF11111)

Issue(s)	(5) Very Effective	(4) Effective	(3) Acceptable	(2) Ineffective	(1) Very Ineffective	(0) No Action	(____) Custom Score
1. Introduction for guest speaker, Dr. Thornton **Item(s): 1,2,2a,7**	□ Provided an extensive introduction for Dr. Thornton based on the bio.	□ Provided an extensive outline of information that will be covered in the introduction. Schedules a meeting to review the introduction.	□ Provides a general outline (does not go into specifics) or major points that will be included in the introduction	□ Informs Julia when and where he/she will get to the introduction	□ Responds to Julia, but does not include any information about the introduction.	□ Did not send a message regarding the issues.	□ _____
2. Budget issues **Item(s): 3, 3a, 6**	□ Identified budget miscalculation and made corrections. Informed Suchin Patel of the mistake. Responded with a caterer, may or may not be S&D	□ Responded by informing Suchin of the cost of catering, (may or may not be S&D) while remaining within the budget constraints. But does not identify budget miscalculation.	□ Responded to Suchin reassuring her of commitment to stay within budget, but does not include who will be catering. Did not stay within budget, but explanation included food quality and press.	□ Did not stay in budget, did not provide reasoning.	□ Responded to Suchin, but did not provide any useful information regarding budget.	□ Did not send a message regarding the issues.	□ _____
3. Interns **Item(s): 4,4a**	□ Responded to both Grant and Natalie Duncan. Provided effective solution to the issue. Emphasized importance of school and work. Handled delicate conversation with Natalie appropriately.	□ Responded to Natalie Duncan. Communicated concern for interns, emphasized the importance of both school and work, and provided reasonable solution to the issue.	□ Responds to Grant with instructions of how to fix the issue. Addresses the importance of school. Potentially loses interns for SPA Conference.	□ Responds to Natalie Duncan with an apology for troubles, but does not provide any solution.	□ Responded to Natalie Duncan inappropriately. Did not portray concern for intern education. Made no notion of a change in intern priority.	□ Did not send a message regarding the issues.	□ _____

Issue(s)	(5) Very Effective	(4) Effective	(3) Acceptable	(2) Ineffective	(1) Very Ineffective	(0) No Action	(____) Custom Score
4. Reservation **Item(s): 2,3,3a,5**	□ Responded to Steven Phillips with corrections to both room and date errors and identified potential budget issue. Requests a new confirmation. Makes dinner reservation.	□ Responded to Steven Phillips with correction to dates but not room. Requests new confirmation. Makes dinner reservation.	□ Responded to Steven with corrections, but did not show concern for effect on budget. Requested ideas for dinner reservation, or delegated task.	□ Responded to Steven with correction to room type but not dates. No dinner reservations made.	□ Does not identify reservation errors. Confirms the reservation as is.	□ Did not send a message regarding the issues.	□
5. Catering **Item(s): 8,8a,9** Peripheral items 3,3a,6	□ Insists that S&D do not cater the conference. Handles delicate conversation with John Taylor appropriately. Came up with creative alternative and informed Mosha and Suchin of changes and gave directions accordingly.	□ Recognized the issue. Insisted that S&D do not cater conference. Responded to John Taylor appropriately. Came up with alternative solution.	□ Recognized the issue. Responded to John Taylor appropriately. May or may not allow S&D to cater with stipulations.	□ Recognized the issue. Responded to John Taylor inappropriately. May or may not use S&D, but does not include solution to the issue.	□ Did not realize implications of remaining with S&D. Did not respond to John Taylor appropriately.	□ Did not send a message regarding the issues.	□

6. Overall score for Communication Skills: Expresses thoughts and ideas clearly and concisely using appropriate basic language guidelines (i.e. grammar). Effectively provides information to relevant others.				
(5) Very Effective ☐	(4) Effective ☐	(3) Acceptable ☐	(2) Ineffective ☐	(1) Very Ineffective ☐
7. Overall score for Relationship Skills: Responds appropriately to supervisors, subordinates, clients, guests, and other co-workers. Expresses empathy and shows support for others when appropriate. Collaborates with others when necessary.				
(5) Very Effective ☐	(4) Effective ☐	(3) Acceptable ☐	(2) Ineffective ☐	(1) Very Ineffective ☐
8. Overall score for Critical Reasoning Skills: Prioritizes information and/or tasks. Makes decisions that are in the best interest of the organization. Identifies central issues and root causes of problems. Draws reasonable conclusions based on given information.				
(5) Very Effective ☐	(4) Effective ☐	(3) Acceptable ☐	(2) Ineffective ☐	(1) Very Ineffective ☐

9. Overall score for In-basket Performance				
(5) Very Effective ☐	(4) Effective ☐	(3) Acceptable ☐	(2) Ineffective ☐	(1) Very Ineffective ☐

Number of responses_____ Number of issues responded to_____

Appendix G: Debriefing Document

Thank you for your participation in our study about meditation, stress, and performance. The kinds of questions and activities you completed today will help us to figure out the potential relationship between relaxation interventions, stress, and performance. I will now pass out an information sheet if you have any questions or concerns about your blood pressure. To assist in the process of collecting data, we ask you to not share any information from today's lab session with your peers.

If after participating in this study today you have concerns about your blood pressure, stress, or any potential health concern, the following resources have professionals who might be able to help you. Feel free to contact these service providers directly should you want help with blood pressure or stress related problems.

MTSU Health Services
MTSU Health, Wellness, and Recreation Center
(615) 898-2988

MTSU Counseling Services
MTSU – KUC Room 329
(615) 898-2670