You have been hired as a consultant by Reynolds Bumpers Gearhart (RBG), a Chicago-based company that recently purchased Fayetteville-based Sake Logistics for $250 million in cash and stock. One concern for RBG is incorporating Sake’s 300 employees into its current workforce of 4,000 – especially the workers in its offices in Shenzhen (China), Singapore, and Jeddah (Saudi Arabia).

RBG has faced this problem before. In 2012, RBG purchased another firm, Hub Logistics. Its employees struggled to adjust to cultural differences regarding time and communication. These new teams missed several deadlines and produced low-quality work for several months before collaborating effectively with their colleagues working abroad. RBG wants to make sure Sake employees receive the proper training to work together and collaborate effectively with team members in these three locations. Instead of learning by trial and error like Hub employees did, RBG wants Sake employees to communicate and collaborate effectively from the start.

RBG wants to prevent the problems that occurred in 2012 from happening again. What recommendations would you give them to overcome these challenges and navigate a new business environment in these locations? What relationship-building strategies would you recommend to Sake employees to help them collaborate with team members across the globe and develop stronger ties with them? Senior management needs to learn what the current research is on teamwork, negotiating diverse viewpoints, working across different time zones, and cross-cultural communication. RBG and Sake senior management would also like to know how other companies have successfully dealt with similar challenges. Your job is to conduct this research and provide two recommendations to senior management.

**Your task:** Compose a 2-page, single-spaced business brief providing RBG and Sake with two recommendations for working with a new team. Be mindful of your tone; you should **recommend**, not dictate action.

**Note:** You must cite 4 different articles/sources in APA on your references page. The references page won’t count towards the 2-page requirement. When citing sources, use parenthetical citations (*Publication Manual of the APA* §6.11-21), not footnotes. The readings below are in APA format.

**Readings that will help you form your recommendations:**

Cross, R., Rebele, R., & Grant, A. (2016). Collaborative Overload. *Harvard Business Review*, 94(1), 74-79.

Kwan, L. (2019). The Collaboration Blind Spot. *Harvard Business Review*, 97(2), 66-73.

Meyer, E. (2017). Being the Boss in Brussels, Boston, and Beijing: If You Want to Succeed, You’ll Need to Adapt.

*Harvard Business Review*, 95(4), 70-77.

Schaubroeck, R., Tarczewski, F., & Theunissen, R. (2016). Making collaboration across functions a reality. *McKinsey*

*Quarterly*, 2, 106-112. Retrieved from Business Source Complete database.

Thomas, D., & Ely, R. (1996). Making Differences Matter: A New Paradigm for Managing Diversity. *Harvard Business*

*Review,* 74(7), 79-90.

Woolley, A., Malone, T., & Chabris, C. (2015, January 16). Why Some Teams are Smarter than Others. *New York*

*Times.* Retrieved from LexisNexis Academic database.

Please note that several organizations are known for their collaboration initiatives and policies: Apple, [Ford Motor Company (One Ford Plan),](https://www.inc.com/maya-hu-chan/is-your-companys-teamwork-out-of-whack-listen-to-alan-mullaly.html) General Electric, [Google (Project Aristotle)](https://rework.withgoogle.com/print/guides/5721312655835136/), [IBM](https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/16/why-ibm-sends-its-best-employees-abroad-for-four-weeks.html), P&G, Walmart, and Xerox.

Students must submit the business brief as either a .doc, .docx, or .pdf file type to **Blackboard** by **11.59pm** on **October 11th.** Other file types cannot be graded and **will receive an automatic “0” grade** for the assignment. **No late work will be accepted**.

Your name

Date

WCOB 1111

Instructor name

Teamwork Recommendations for Reynolds Bumpers Gearhart Senior Management

Your first sentence should **summarize the purpose of your business brief in an interesting, engaging way**. Your first sentence should not say “The purpose of this brief is to inform you about *x*” or something equally wordy and boring; instead, say something more interesting like “While Reynolds Bumpers Gearhart has long used cross-functional, remote teams to complete projects, ensuring those teams possess a collaborative ethos remains a challenge.” Please note that you may *not* use the sentence quoted above as your first sentence; say something equally engaging and impactful that also signals *why* you are writing to your reader. After that initial sentence, you will want to provide an overview of your recommendations. In short, succinctly state what two initiatives/programs/practices you recommend. Do not go into great depth as to *why* you are recommending them or *how* you recommend Reynolds Bumpers Gearhart (RBG) implement them, as that will be what the body paragraphs do. Your introduction’s final sentence should summarize in one or two points how your solutions will benefit RBG.

Your first body paragraph should go into greater depth about the first initiative/program/practice you recommended to RBG. Be sure your topic sentence does not merely provide information or describe the initiative. Instead, your **topic sentence should put forth a position/make a claim that the rest of the paragraph substantiates.** For example, do not say “Marriott also has a diverse workforce and uses *x method* to form its new teams after acquisitions occur.” That sentence simply describes and does not provide the reader with any advance information about the contents of the paragraph. In short, that sentence **reads like something you would see in a research essay instead of a business brief** recommending a certain action. Instead, a sentence such as “**I recommend** RBG adopt *x method of team formation* because Marriott, which also has acquired new companies, has gained recognition as an industry leader in teamwork since adopting this method in 2008.” Note how this topic sentence clearly states the method/program, why the writer believes the program will succeed at RBG, and a key statistic/fact about Marriott’s program. Also, by stating that similar programs have succeeded at an organization who has had similar experiences, the writer shows himself/herself to be a credible, knowledgeable party. Since you are an outside consultant and **not an RBG employee, you should refrain from using “our” and “us”** – you are not a part of RBG, so you cannot use “our” because it would confuse your readers. While technically speaking, you may use “we” since you are speaking on behalf of your consulting firm while providing a recommendation, we prefer you use “I” so as to not confuse your reader. Also, do not use “you” or “your” while referring to RBG; instead use “RBG” or the company’s full name, Reynolds Bumpers Gearhart. So you don’t confuse your audience, be sure you use the full name (Reynolds Bumpers Gearhart) before you begin using the acronym (R2BG). As before, please do not use the sentence given above as your topic sentence.

You should continue your first body paragraph by describing the methods Marriott uses as well as the successful outcomes and drawbacks to these methods. **Be sure to back up these points with information from your research** – parenthetically cite any ideas, information, or quotations you take from your sources. For example, you could argue that project teams need more communication from management so that “the role of the team was clearly understood…[so that] team members know how their work fit into [the company’s] larger mission” (Duhigg, 2016). You should then provide reasons as to *why* you think this program would succeed at RBG. Again, be sure to **back up your reasoning** with research. Backing up your reasoning will help **create trust** between you and your reader. We recommend you have one paragraph for each recommendation, but will not penalize you if you combine your recommendations into one longer paragraph. **Regardless of whether you decide to have one longer or two shorter paragraphs, you must have effective topic sentences that put forth a position that are then followed by several sentences that support your position**.

Be sure to remember that if you are comparing the programs/initiatives/practices of a much larger company than RBG (such as FDIC) or a company with very different products/services from RBG (such as the Ford Motor Company), you will need to mention **what changes need to be made to them** in order to make these programs/initiatives/practices suitable for RBG. If you do not think any changes need to be made to them, then simply **provide your reasoning** as to *why* you think that. Also, if your proposed program/initiative/practice has a timeline, be sure to provide a realistic time frame for how long it would take to put it in place.

Your second body paragraph should follow the example given above.

Your conclusion should end the brief on a positive note. Do not begin your conclusion by stating “In conclusion, I recommend…” Instead, state “These recommendations will help RBG accomplish *x*” or something similar to that; doing so will better emphasize the strengths of your argument as you lead into your call to action. Your **call to action** should outline the next steps for RBG but should do so in a tonally appropriate way. Do not say “Senior management must” or “Team leaders should” as you lack the social authority to compel them to undertake these actions. Instead, **focus on the benefits** of this next course of action and the intangible costs (time, effort, personnel needed) involved. Avoid overselling your point – “your teams will work together perfectly and never miss another deadline again” – or underselling your point by watering down or not reiterating your argument’s key strengths. Instead, simply state how your recommendations will help RBG improve the work of its cross-functional teams and thus improve its overall performance.

Your references page – yes, you need to have one – should be in **APA** format, as should your parenthetical citations. For the formatting of the paper itself, you can use this model as a guide; you are, however, welcome to use subheadings if you choose. Be sure to give your brief an appropriate title. Please do not use footnoted citations for this business brief.