The Memo Revision Assignment

Presented by

Student Success Center
Choose a topic is relevant and researchable
  – Can I identify my community/audience?
  – Will I be able to find outside information to inform my analysis?

Avoid being too narrow or too broad

If you have already committed to your topic, decide whether it needs to be refocused to become broader or narrower
Topic Selection Tips

• Choose a real company, not an imaginary one.
• Choose a company that you can do research on
  – Company should be too small, because you won’t be able to find information
  – Company should be from a country that does not make information publically available
• The problem should be complex – you don’t know the solution(s) yet
• The scope of the problem should not be too broad. If you’re working with a very large company, try to focus on a specific department or branch.
Responding to Instructor Feedback

• Pay close attention to your instructor’s feedback on your initial memo assignment.
  – He/she will be looking to see that you have reviewed and addressed these comments.
  – Instructor comments will help to trigger your own ideas about how to improve your memo.

• If you did not receive detailed feedback or have any specific questions, feel free to ask your instructor – they are here to help!
Organizing Your Memo

• Follow your instructor’s guidelines for page length – sometimes the requirement is 2 pages, sometimes 1 page
• The paper is shorter than the initial memo, and the recommended structure is simpler
  – Initial memo: Background, Reasons, Research plan/Timeline, Needs
  – Revised Memo: Problem/Purpose, Research Plan
• Condense your analysis, but do not leave out any major components
Using the Rubric as a Guide

- Be sure to understand the sections and criteria of your rubric – this is how your paper is scored!
- The rubric is helpful for *drafting* the content of your memo and also for *revising/proofreading* your memo before you submit it.
Rubric: Content/Assignment Parameters

• The purpose of your memo should be clear from the *very first sentence*!
• It is not enough to state a problem; you need to *prove* that the problem exists and is significant
• In your memo, you do not need to solve the problem, but you need to provide a *strategy* and *timeline* for solving it
• Be realistic about the budget and resources that you are requesting – don’t be afraid to ask for what practical and necessary to complete your proposal
Rubric: Audience

• Who are the specific decision makers that you are addressing in your proposal?
• Do they work within the department or group within your company that would handle issues related to your topic?
• Have you anticipated and addressed their major concerns and possible objections in your memo?
• Think of your instructor as part of your audience, too. Have you provided him/her with enough context to understand your proposal?
Rubric: Organization

- Do you have an introduction that will draw your audience in?
- Are your paragraphs clear and developed? If there are any sentences that do not advance the paragraph, they can be deleted!
- Are you using section headings and white space to improve readability and skim value?
- Do the transitions between sections make sense?
- Does your conclusion resolve your paper in a satisfying way?
Rubric: Mechanics, Format, Design

• Language and syntax
  – Your sentences should be direct, concise, and clear, but also sophisticated. Show an advanced knowledge of your topic.
  – Proofread your paper for spelling and grammar before submitting it – try reading it out loud to yourself!
  – Make sure that any listed/bulleted items have parallel structure

• Is there a way to improve the aesthetics of your document without being unnecessarily fancy?

• Have you maximized skim value?
Additional Resources

• Ask a question or make an appointment with a librarian: http://guides.library.jhu.edu/hebusiness
• Make a tutoring appointment: carey.jhu.edu/ssc
• Email us: carey.tutoring@jhu.edu