The White Paper Assignment

A Section-by-Section Approach

Presented by

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Workshop Overview

- Detailed breakdown of assignment description and requirements
- Suggestions for organizing each section of your written paper (keeping the rubric in mind)

Assignment Description

*Write a report in which you put forward the **results** of your research and your **recommendations** to your company or organization.*

- Your overall focus should be on the information you have learned and how your company should act on that information

- Think of this assignment as the solution to the problem you presented in your memo

Assignment Description

The text of the report should be no fewer than 5 pages and no more than 7, double-spaced, in line with APA guidelines for format and documentation.

- Including your cover page and reference list, the requirement is 7 to 9 pages

- APA format is useful for organizing your paper into the specified sections

Assignment Description

You should apply information that you have obtained from at least seven credible references (as well as interviews and a survey if possible).

- Decide how best to incorporate each reference to maximize its contribution to your paper

- References can be incorporated into multiple sections (background, alternative solutions, recommendations, etc.)

- Interviews/surveys do not count as references, but you should refer to them in your paper and include them as appendices or supplemental material

Assignment Description

(1)   *an executive summary;*

(2)   *relevant background information;*

(3)   *a clear articulation of the problem and the people and resources it affects;*

(4)   *different perspectives related to the problem, and alternative solutions;*

(5)   *your recommendations and the reasons for them;*

(6)   *qualitative and quantitative evidence supporting your reasons and conclusions;*

(7)   *a list of references; and*

(8)   *appendices and supplementary material.*

Background

- Start here; save the Executive Summary for last (even though it goes at the beginning)
- Consider your audience/recipients when deciding which background information to include
- Include enough basic information about your company and its situation so that your instructor/someone unfamiliar can understand
- Revisit the information from your memo with new insights from your research
- Briefly describe your research methods and the purpose of your report
  - "Based on the results of a survey and other business research, this White Paper offers recommendations…"

Problem Description and People and Resources Affected

- Be as specific as possible when defining your company's problem

- Provide evidence to prove that the problem exists (use at least one reference)

- Analyze the problem's causes thoroughly

- Clearly explain who is affected and what is at stake
  - Personnel, market share, sales numbers, the company's growth, etc.

Perspectives and Alternative Solutions

- Separately identify two to four different approaches or ways of understanding your company and its problem
- Each approach should be represented/supported by at least one of your references
  - Organize each approach into a subsection/sub-heading
  - Provide the important contextual information for each reference: journal name, author credentials, methodology, conclusion
  - Summarize, paraphrase, or directly quote the strongest or most relevant parts of those articles, including an in-text citation for every idea that comes from one of your sources (name, date, page number)
- Define a full range of arguments and possible solutions, even the ones that disagree with yours

Recommendations and Supporting Reasons

- Include two to four distinct recommendations
  - Organize each recommendation into a subsection/sub-heading
  - Each recommendation must be *feasible*
  - Each recommendation must be based on *strong evidence*
  - Each recommendation must be a solution to the specific problem you have identified

Conclusion/Next Steps

- Not one of the required sections, but might be helpful if there is more to say or summarize beyond your recommendations

- Your conclusion can also be a subsection/sub-heading within your Recommendations section

- Summarize and reiterate your problem and its significance, and crystallize how your recommendations will *improve the company*

- You must persuade your audience/recipient to take action and implement your changes

Reference List (Example)

Fischer, G.D. (2013). *Into the abyss.* New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Ikua, D.M. & Namusonge, J.S. (2013). Factors affecting growth of information communication technology firms in Nairobi, Kenya. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 7*(3). 1-33.

Smith, T. & Applebaum, M. (2014). *Scientific theory: A look into the past.* Retrieved from Harvard University, Massachusetts, Center for Advanced Science website: http://www.harvard.edu/cas_scientific_theory

Appendices and Supplemental Material

- Should come after the reference list
- Does not count towards the page length requirement
- Should include additional information (especially surveys/interviews) that is important but does not fit within the text of the report

Executive Summary

- Think of this as the 1-page version of your White Paper
  - An executive should be able to read this and not be missing anything of major importance from your full paper
  - Summarize the most important information from each of the sections you've already written
  - From rubric: "provide an overview of the report's purpose, problem being addressed, research methods, & recommendations"

Additional Resources

- Ask a question or make an appointment with a librarian: http://guides.library.jhu.edu/hebusiness

- Make a tutoring appointment: http://carey.idfive.com/life-at-carey/student-development/academic-support/student-success-center

- Email us: carey.tutoring@jhu.edu

Summary Response Table

Main Points from Outside Research	My Responses/Reactions
Article #1, Idea #1	
Article #1, Idea #2	
Article #1, Idea #3	
Article #2, Idea #1	
Article #2, Idea #2	
Article #2, Idea #3	
Article #3, Idea #1	
Article #3, Idea #2	
Article #3, Idea #3	

Argument Components

Foundation of a Logical Argument	
Claim	What are you saying?
Evidence	How can your audience be sure that what you are saying is true?
Impact	Even if what you are saying is true, why should your audience care?