

## COM 211 Team Project Report/Paper Assignment

The class will be organized into 4 teams of no more than 5 students each, working together in a collaborative effort to complete a semester-long oral and written project. All teams will be expected to work together on this project. Teams will also be expected to complete several assignments during the course that will generally relate to helping teams complete this project.

### Assignment objectives:

To work effectively together as a team to develop an informative report and written proposal as well as a persuasive presentation, both designed to achieve a successful outcome.

### Due Date:

The report is due no later than 11:59 pm on **December 10, 2023**. Your report will be submitted as a team to the Final Report/Paper dropbox on Brightspace. Each team's final presentation based on that report is scheduled for **December 5**. This will give all teams a chance to refine their reports based on their presentation. The final presentation is worth 75 points, while the final paper is worth 125 points. This makes the final project worth 200 points or 20 percent of your final grade.

### Team assignment:

Your team has one of two options to consider in structuring your report and presentation. Either one is acceptable but you must commit to your decision by the end of September. Here are your options:

- Your team has been chosen by your organization to develop a business proposal for a prospective client in the hopes of engaging this client as a customer. The proposal will be an idea developed by your team that should convince this prospective client to agree to a business relationship with your organization. In short, your team must come up with an idea that this client will be willing to pay your company to develop and/or execute for them.
- Your team is challenged by your organization to come up with an idea that will benefit the organization in some way. Your team will develop a proposal that presents this idea in the most favorable light possible, such that your organization agrees to adopt your idea.

Regardless of the option your team chooses, your task will be to do research to gain valuable information about the subject (the client or your organization), analyze that business, and then develop a proposal based on what your team has learned with the goal of successfully convincing the subject of the benefits of your idea. In either case, your written report will be directed to your organization, whether to propose an idea for the prospective client or to propose a beneficial idea for your own organization. Your oral presentation will be a somewhat condensed version of this report.

In terms of your team's assignment, each team should choose an organization (either for-profit or non-profit) to study for either option. That organization will be researched and analyzed in order to gain the information necessary to make an effective proposal. You must consider a standalone-type business that might benefit from a new idea or an emerging company looking for a way to grow. **Avoid choosing huge organizations** with many divisions (Nike, Apple, Microsoft, Sony). Also, publicly traded companies will have more information available to you than those privately owned.

Become familiar with your selected business and understand the industry in which it operates. From the research obtained from journal articles, annual reports, industry reports, and other sources, you should be able to compile sufficient information to prepare an excellent report. Bear in mind that this entire project is about 1) what your team can learn about this company in terms of your research; 2) how you analyze the company's ability to function from both positive and negative points of view; and 3) from that analysis, develop a successful proposal idea that can either convince a **client** to **buy** your idea or convince your **own organization** to **adopt** it.

### **Submission requirements:**

- This report should be written in APA style and be in the vicinity of **4000-4500 words**, excluding title page, executive summary, and references. While the report must be turned in by the above deadline, teams may wish to submit in advance to get feedback for a revised and improved version.
- A **15-20 minute** presentation based on the report will be delivered to the class. It is essential that your team prepare your presentation so that it is no shorter than 15 minutes and no longer than 20 minutes. You must adhere to the time limit or face a deduction in points.
- A minimum of five academic (peer-reviewed) sources are required for your proposal report. Additionally, you should have at least 5 credible website sources.
- An oral presentation rubric will be used for all presentations. All team members will complete a self and team evaluation.

### **Report Organization**

Each report should be organized according to APA style guidelines. Please refer to this [Purdue OWL \(Online Writing Lab\) article](#) for the correct usage of headers and subheaders. Referring to the outline below, numbered sections should be Level 1 headers, while lettered sections should be Level 2 headers. Follow the APA guidance but feel free to add/use sections in all levels for maximum report organization and clarity.

1. Executive summary - a 1 to 2-page overview of the report's contents. The summary should only include information contained in the report
2. Company Information:
  1. A description of the business
  2. A brief history
  3. The industry in which it operates

4. Its purpose for being in business
  5. The organization's mission and/or vision statement
  6. Sales and profit, if applicable.
3. SWOT analysis ([Read this article](#) to get ideas for completing your SWOT. You can also use references from the library, and the SWOT analysis will be discussed in class). A minimum of 3 examples is required for each part of the SWOT analysis:
1. Strengths
  2. Weaknesses
  3. Opportunities
  4. Threats
4. Proposal
1. Choose one opportunity from your SWOT analysis and prepare a proposal for innovation or improvement. You will explain the opportunity, how it will benefit the entity, and how it will be carried out. You **MUST** develop an idea that your team can provide or implement **for your proposed client/customer to buy**.
  2. When addressing the opportunity, you may wish to consider the threats to the company in order to overcome any objections (External environmental threats could include competition, social-cultural, political-legal, suppliers, natural resources, the economy, consumer behavior, and technology).

### Notes on the Team Project

- Between the final report and presentation and the milestone assignment, this project constitutes a major portion of your grade in this class. That means it will require a major effort on every student's part. While team members are typically graded identically for all team assignments, each team member will complete an evaluation form after the completion of each team activity. You will rate your fellow team members on various aspects of their contribution to the team effort. I will take these evaluations into consideration when I assign project grades for each team member.
- The team project will have several team assignments, with each assignment designed to be a "building block" for teams to complete various aspects of the activity. These assignments will typically occur every 2-3 weeks.
- The goal of this project is to get your team to work together in different ways with different goals and outcomes. It will be a challenge to work over a long period of time on a single project with a group of people that you must depend upon for their contributions and collaborations. Yet it is that challenge that will aid you and your team in skills to manage timelines, availability of team members, key milestone dates, etc.
- I will build into our class time each week for teams to meet (usually with me for a brief face-to-face progress report), it will be crucial for teams to determine when and how to meet outside of class. Virtual meetings will probably be a reality for many teams but try to work out times when you can all meet face-to-face. It is likely that you will make more and better progress in those settings.

## **Rubric/Evaluation**

Your oral presentation will be graded on an oral rubric/evaluation. Your team paper will be graded on the following criteria:

- Writing Quality - Is the quality of the writing good? Is the paper written in complete sentences and paragraphs of appropriate lengths? Are there spelling or serious grammatical errors? Is the paper a cohesive effort that flows easily from one section to the next?
- Research Quality - Does the paper have well-sourced information? Are those sources properly cited in-text and on a References page using APA style?
- Analysis - Is the SWOT analysis thorough and well-explained? Are the individual elements of the SWOT analysis correctly delineated (correct strengths, correct weaknesses, correct opportunities, correct threats)?
- Proposal - Is the proposal based on one of the opportunities in the SWOT analysis? Is the proposal based on the logical argument (state the idea - state the reasons supporting the idea - provide evidence to support each reason)?
- Organization - Is the paper organized according to the requirements? Are there headers for each section of the paper that aids the reader in easily following along? Are the paragraphs arranged in a way that conform to the structure requirements?
- Teamwork Quality - How well did the team function together? Was there cooperation by all team members in completing the project?

[Here is a sample paper that was recently submitted by one of the teams in COM 211.](#) This is representative of what I am looking for but should not be considered as an ideal effort. It has good structure and is fairly well-written.