Memorandum

Date: April 10, 2019

To: BCOM 3113 Students

From: Sylvia Hill, BCOM Lecturer

Subject: Short Report Assignment, due May 1, 2019

The main purposes of this assignment are for you to

- Gather information for specific readers and purposes,
- Organize and format information with proper citations, and
- Demonstrate your ability to apply all the principles of effective written communication.

Short Report Topic -- Choose one of the three options below for your short report:

1. Finding Out How to Generate Positive Customer Reviews: As with every other facet of online sales, good customer reviews don’t just happen; they can be cultivated as well. Research the Internet and social media posts to find out how companies (1) encourage customers to post reviews on their websites and (2) try to ensure that those reviews are positive. Find out, also, what tactics one should not use and why. You’ll write up your findings as a memo report to Mindy Swales, a small-business owner whom your instructor recruited as a client for this assignment. Mindy runs a coffee and wine shop in an upper-middle-class neighborhood in your city—and she has some stiff competition. She can really use your help.

   Attach your memo report to a transmittal e-mail message addressed to your supervisor, Mindy Swales.

2. Exploring Online Meeting Options: You were recently hired as an intern at Mayim’s, a distributor of high-end cosmetics and skin care products. Kori Roberts, sales manager and your supervisor, drops by your office to chat one day and brings up a subject she’s been wondering about. “Our sales staff have been communicating with each other and our retailers fairly effectively via phone and email, but I think it’s time to look into an online meeting application to supplement these methods. Do you know what kind of tool I’m talking about?” she asks. You nod, having just covered online meeting tools in your Technology for Business Communication class. “I heard some of these options were totally free and really easy to use,” she continues, “so I looked into a few. Skype, Google Hangouts, WebEx, and OpenMeetings seem to be pretty popular for businesses. I’m thinking about recommending that all the sales staff subscribe to one of these. Then maybe they could talk to each other and the retailers more easily. I wonder which of these tools is better for us. And is there any downside to online meetings? What works best for small companies? Are there security issues?” You take the hint and offer to look into the matter for her.

   Do the necessary research—and, if you haven’t yet done so, try one or more of these services yourself—and then write Kori a report giving her the information she needs in order to decide whether or not to pursue this idea further. She may want to share your report with other managers in the company, so this is a good opportunity to make an impression and someday advance your career.

   Attach your memo report to a transmittal e-mail message addressed to your supervisor, Kori Roberts.
3. **Helping Your Boss Promote Mindfulness**: You’re a management major interning with a large customer-data company. Your company sells technology that collects detailed records of what customers buy, at what price, and when, and then crunches those data to help companies improve their revenue. The employees include computer engineers, salespeople, client consultants, customer support staff, technicians, and professionals in other business areas. You’ve been assigned to various areas of the company to “learn your chops,” so to speak, and you’re currently reporting to Jennifer Sachs, the director of communications. One of Jennifer’s duties is to work with the president to write the script for his monthly video to the employees. Jennifer has been coming across more and more articles about the detrimental effects of multitasking and the benefits of focused, “mindful” work, so she thinks she’ll recommend that the president’s next talk be on this subject. That’s where you come in. “See what you can find out about mindfulness on the job,” she asks you. “Find out what it means, how to have it, what its benefits are, who’s practicing it.”

Do the research and then write Jennifer a memo report answering her (and the president’s) likely questions and helping them see what approach to take to this topic in the video.

**Attach your memo report to a transmittal e-mail message addressed to your supervisor, Jennifer Sachs.**

**NOTE:** If you are not a business major and would like to change the details of one of these assignments to apply better to your field, talk to me about your ideas for revision.

**Format**

Remember these tips as you are composing your short report:

- Organize your information in an easy-to-read memo report. Memo format example in textbook, page 449. Short Report:
  - This will be the memo report attached to your e-mail.
  - You will compose in memo format – Follow heading format as it appears on page 449 of your text.
  - Design a business logo for the top of the memo that is related to the business in your chosen prompt. Type Memo Report underneath the logo.

- Your first page will be your transmittal message in e-mail format. An example of a transmittal in letter format is on page 438.
  - An e-mail message to your boss
  - Length will be ½ to 1 Page
  - E-Mail Format -
    - From:
    - To:
    - Cc:
    - Subject:
    - Describe briefly what information is included in the report.

- Keep in mind your reader’s interests and the purpose for the information. The report will probably be about two – four pages, although it may be more depending on the amount of information you include.
- Avoid overly casual language, explain well, since the report will be read by your boss and may be passed on to other supervisors or executives.
- Decide how to carefully organize the information in a functional, helpful way with appropriate headings for each section of the report. You may use bulleted lists or other graphic aids, such as graphs, charts, or pictures, if they will help present the information concisely and clearly. Chapter 3 of your textbook includes many tips on using visuals.
• Remember that when memos are more than one page, you should use continuation-page headings like you see in this memo.
• Keep all information accurate and up-to-date!

Research

Please follow these guidelines for your informal short report:

• Use Chicago/Turabian Style Format
• Use at least three sources.
• Do not forget to cite sources within your report using citation footnotes.
• Appendix B in your textbook covers citation.
• Use the reference tab in Word to insert footnotes. Use the link to the Edmon Low Library site that will format your footnotes in Chicago style.
• Do not plagiarize! Use citations for ideas you found in sources as well as direct quotes.

Library Research Lesson – April 15, 2019

Meet in Room 206 of the library for help in locating sources for your report.

In-class Work Day – April 26, 2019

Bring your laptops to class with a draft of your short report ready for editing. We will be doing more research, working on the format, going over how to do footnote citations, and I will be answering any questions you may have about your informal short report.

Conferences (optional) – April 29, 2019

I will send a link to a Google doc where you can sign up for a conference time. Bring a rough draft of your informal report for individual consultation about the informal report assignment. Be prepared to ask specific questions.

Peer Review Day for Short Report – May 1, 2019

Have your report draft ready for peer evaluation. When you have made the final revisions, submit your report to the Dropbox in BrightSpace.

Evaluation Criteria

Remember that the most important aspect of a report is usability. The information must be well-organized, clear, 100% accurate, and verifiable. This report must be in your own words except where direct quotations are used.

Grade:  Transmittal Message – 15 points
Informal Short Report – 100 points

Points will be assigned based on how well you apply the principles of business communication discussed in the textbook and in class (see the Scoring Rubric in the syllabus and the PEC on Connect.).