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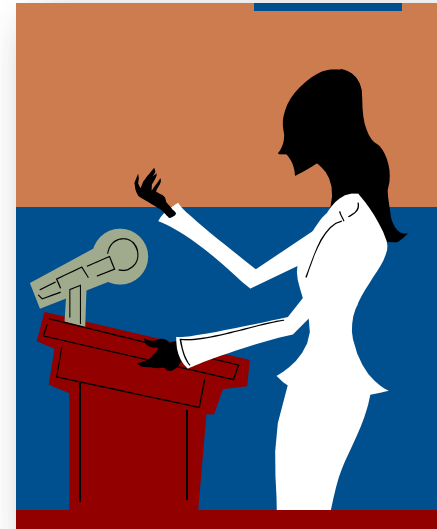talifvendahl@stritch.edu
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Advice on Writing a Capstone Paper

Purpose

- The Capstone Paper should act as a:
  - Well grounded overview of a complex subject
  - Message to Convince the reader to accept your views
  - Reality Check
  - Sales Sheet
  - Other

Components

- The Capstone Paper contains:
  - Chapter 1: An Introduction that:
    - Overviews the project
    - Describes the organization studied
    - Defines the Business Problem
    - Describes Scope and Limitations of the Study
   - Example: Due to time limit and size of company....

Components cont'd

- Chapter 2: Literature Review
  - Describes
    - Research Data Bases
    - Sources of information used by the Researcher
      - Background = Company information
      - Specific Studies = Books, Journals, etc.
      - Limitations = What could not be studied
  - Synopsizes the literature into themes and/or similar content
  - Summarizes the information and provides a transition into the Method

Components cont'd

- Chapter 3: Method
  - Provides a clear Purpose and Research Question
  - Examines alternative Methods
  - Overviews Collection and Assessment Procedures
  - Describes Tools and Tests Used
  - Describes Conclusions derived from Data
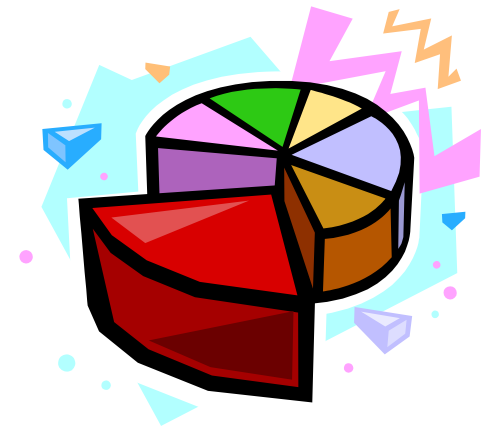
Components cont'd

- Chapter 4: Results and Analysis
  - Provides Description of Findings
  - Links Findings to Research Question
- Chapter 5: Conclusion/Discussion
  - Provides Recommendations
  - Describes Implementation Processes

ANALYSIS
SOLUTION
PROCESS
OBJECTIVES
TEAMWORK
VISION
SALES
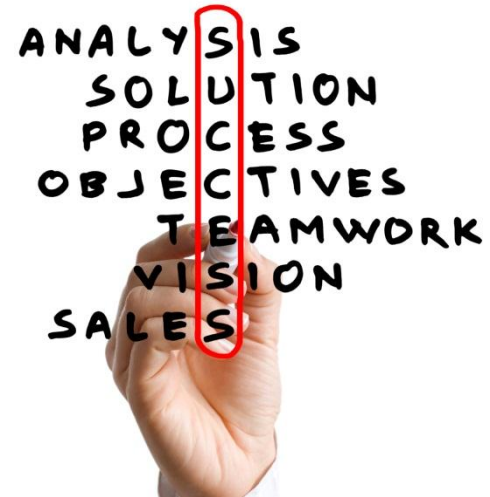
Writing Tips

- **Introduction**
  - In introducing your paper, clearly define its purpose.
  - Explain the scope and sequence the writer seeks to achieve.
  - Identify the parts of the paper and the key elements that motivate the author's reasons for writing.

Tips cont'd

- **Headers, Sentences, Paragraphs**
  - **Headers** define stages and parts of a paper (think the five parts of an academic paper…Introduction, Literature Review, Methods of Research, Summary of Findings, Conclusions).
  - **Headers** break up papers into easily digestible segments

Tips cont'd

- Have you every had a "**head ache**" from poorly written sentences?
  - **Sentences** convey thoughts, facts, and information. They seek to present a complete thought. Simplicity is useful.
  - **Paragraphs** communicate groups of thoughts and information that are inter-related and address the same topic.

Tips cont'd

- **Transitions**
  - Seek to help limit your sentence to <u>one thought</u>.
  - Transitions indicate what the next sentence is leading too and provide a clear clue as to the end of a thought.
  - The first sentence in any paragraph *introduces the concept* of the paragraph to the reader.
  - The middle of the paragraph is the *intellectual meat* of this element while the end acts to *summarize* paragraph content.

Tips cont'd

- **Self-Editing**
  - Begin writing the <u>first draft</u> by using an existing outline or by creating one.
    - Assume that you will be writing more than one draft of a paper.
    - The editing process initiates when the first draft is complete.
    - It focuses on insuring that the research question, supporting information, and concluding thoughts are contiguous.
  - Each supports the other!

Tips cont'd

- The <u>final edit</u> focuses on correcting grammar and typographical errors.
  - It also checks factual information
  - It analyzes the flow of information to insure that each pertinent question derived from the core research question is answered.

Tips cont'd

- The <u>best editor</u> is not the writer.
  - A second reader will spot errors of composition or thought more quickly than the writer buried in the document.
    - Editors have to be careful of skipping quickly through a document.
    - When editing, mark the paper (**red** pen preferred) with corrections or suggestions.
    - Indicate contributory thoughts to the writer by using a **<u>black</u>** pen.
  - Those color combinations have been used by teachers for years to correct student work.

Tips cont'd

- **Point-of-View**
  - Remember who you are writing for.
  - When reviewing your work put on the "hat" of the reader you are trying to influence.
  - The view of the reader of your work is very different from when you write.
- Always focus on your "audience"!

Tips cont'd

- Finally, build in enough "fudge time" to allow setting your paper down for a day or two.
  - Time will help you see your mistakes more clearly.
  - It is also suggested that you print out the final edit.
  - This is especially true if you prefer ink on paper over pixels on a monitor.
  - Paper and ink become *real* for most readers.
- Reference: Adapted from a document written by *Mark Yannett…11-16-2011*

MGT 499 Grading Rubric

	Rating Scale						
	1	2	3	4	5	N	Instructor Comments
CONTENT INFORMATION							
Executive Summary is written in accordance to the Guideline for Writing the Capstone Paper in Appendix A of the syllabus.							
Introduction is written in accordance to the Guideline for Writing the Capstone Paper in Appendix A of the syllabus.							
Literature Review in accordance to the Guideline for Writing the Capstone Paper in Appendix A of the syllabus.							
The report contains concepts and theories that support scholarship about leader and organizational effectiveness.							
Real-world examples are presented to illustrate concepts and ideas about leaders, followers, and organizational effectiveness.							
Values that underlie organizational culture are identified and described.							
Alternatives for developing organizational leaders are identified and described.							
Concepts, principles, practices, and theories about organizational effectiveness are correctly applied to describe organizational leadership at the executive, business unit, and operational levels of the							
Leadership performance is described as a strategic process and a role that is accountable for achievement of strategic goals and business results.							
Appropriate and specific methods for assessing the effectiveness of organizational leaders are designed and applied.							
Assessment results are organized, summarized, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical tools.							
Results are analyzed and discussed in relation to what has been reported and summarized in review of the relevant literature.							
Conclusions and recommendations are logical and are related to the							

MGT 499 cont'd

CLARITY AND OVERALL READABILITY							
Terms and acronyms are appropriate and explained.							
Paragraphing is appropriate, with smooth transitions and no one-sentence paragraphs.							
Care is demonstrated to avoid the use of pronouns such as "you" and "your," and there is minimal use of "I."							
The report is easy to follow because ideas flow logically.							
The report is written clearly and concisely using standard, formal English (past tense, active voice).							
Information in the text is free from grammatical, punctuation, or spelling and typographical errors.							
The design of the Effectiveness Assessment Tool for evaluating the effectiveness of organizational leadership demonstrates appropriate and sufficient understanding of organizational leadership.							
The content of the report is presented in a scholarly manner and is reasonably accurate, complete, and thorough.							
Recommendations are consistent with information in the findings and discussion sections.							

MGT 499 cont'd

TECHNICAL							
The title page and table of contents include all appropriate information and are formatted in accordance with guidelines presented in Appendix B of this syllabus.							
The report is organized into required sections as set forth in Appendix B of this syllabus and according to APA style.							
The Effectiveness Assessment Tool follows the references.							
Information is selected from appropriate sources (e.g., texts from prior BSM courses, the library, and recommended Internet sources).							
All sources are correctly cited, including adaptations of data in tables and graphs, which are labeled in accordance with APA style.							
All cited sources are fully and correctly written in the references section.							
Footnotes are cited in accordance to the APA Manual. Footnotes refers to content footnotes and copyright permission footnotes.							
Numerical data are organized, summarized, analyzed, and interpreted using appropriate statistical techniques.							
Margins and spacing are in accordance to the Capstone Paper Guidelines found in Appendix A.							
All pages are numbered, including appendixes.							
The report meets the minimum number of pages (at least 40 pages).							
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 Total Points
							0 Numeric Grade

1 = Fails to meet competency
2 = Exhibits minimum competency
3 = Exhibits competency
4 = Exceeds competency
5 = Demonstrates superior competency
N = Not Applicable

MGT 584 Grading Rubric

MGT 584 Capstone Evaluation Rubric	
NAME	
GROUP NUMBER	
NUMBER AND TITLE OF COURSE	
TITLE OF CAPSTONE	
INSTRUCTOR	
EVALUATOR	

	Rating Scale						
	1	2	3	4	5	N	Instructor Comments
ELEMENTS OF STYLE							
CONFORMS TO APA STYLE							
Title Page							
Footnotes *							
Citations							
Reference Page							
Figures, tables							
Format							
Font							

MGT 584 cont'd

GRAMMAR: WORD USAGE AND MECHANICS							
Diction							
Punctuation							
Past tense							
Active voice							
Numbers							
Abbreviations							
SENTENCE STRUCTURE AND STYLE							
Subject/verb agreement							
Transitions							
Word choice							
PAPER FREE OF SPELLING ERRORS AND TYPOS							
Spelling							
Typographical							

MGT 584 cont'd

CONFORMS TO THE GUIDE TO THE GRADUATE							
CAPSTONE RESEARCH PRODUCT							
Title Page							
Executive Summary							
Table of Contents							
List of Tables							
List of Figures							
Introduction							
Literature Review							
Method							
Results and Analysis							
Conclusion							
References							
Appendixes							

MGT 584 cont'd

ORGANIZATION							
PURPOSE							
Clearly recognizable thesis							
Thesis is relevant to business management issues							
Evident throughout the paper							
Solution is relevant to the problem							
Realistic							
Current							
Feasible							
IDEAS ARE:							
Original							
Expressed clearly and coherently							
Sequenced logically							
Appropriate to the level of degree (Bachelor's or Master's)							
Objective							
FLOW							
Sentences support paragraph							
Paragraphs support section headings							
Section headings support main points							
SUPPORT							
Arguments with facts or examples							
Factual statements with citations							
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
							0

1 = Fails to meet competency

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Assumptions

- You are:
  - Writing to Key Decision Makers
  - They are _skeptical_ of your ability!
- Your desired outcome is to convince them that:
  - You are an "expert"
  - You have clearly defined both the "problem" and appropriate solutions
- Sell them on implementation!