

Writing Assignment #4

White Paper for an External Audience

Summary of the Assignment:

- **Task:** In this paper, you will write a document that provides information that an *external* audience can use to inform a decision.

We have read various white papers in the class this semester. White papers can be any one of the following types:

- technical papers
- business benefit papers
- advocacy papers
- hybrid technical/business papers

The CANRIGHT document that is provided in the class in LEO describes all four of these types of white papers.

- **Length:** 1200-1600 words
- **Graphics:** at least three graphics, two of which have to be original
- **Format in Citing and Listing Sources:** APA
- **Number and Sources:** at least five sources, at least one of which has to be obtained through OneSearch

Brief Description of the White Paper:

In preparing for this assignment, you will want to review the following video:

[“White Papers: An Introduction to the Genre and Its Expectations,”](#) from the Purdue OWL

You may take any of the following approaches:

- a general white paper to an external audience – written to individuals in a particular industry or field of study, but not an organization you are a part of. The white paper could address a problem you are attempting to solve in the organization or to inform an external audience about a relevant trend.
- a white paper promoting a new product or service to potential customers. This is an example of a white paper to an external audience, but it features different rhetorical considerations than the typical white paper written to an external audience does.

Both options are discussed in the Purdue OWL video mentioned above.

Please note: You will not be writing a white paper to your boss or to superiors in the company for which you work.

That type of paper would be an internal white paper. If you take WRTG 394, you can write that type of paper. For WRTG 393, we ask for a white paper to an external audience.

Strategies to Consider for the White Paper:

Please follow these guidelines:

- have a focused topic. Please see the sample white papers from previous students for examples of how previous topics have been developed for this paper.
- write to a reasonably focused and identified audience
 - A white paper to an external audience can have a broad audience or a narrow audience.
 - For example, if you do not work for a hair salon and you write a white paper promoting a new billing system for hair salons, the audience will probably be the various hair salons in your neighborhood.
 - A white paper that promotes a product or service to potential customers could have a fairly broad audience.
 - For example, a white paper promoting a new taxi service in your neighborhood has, theoretically, all residents in the neighborhood as a potential audience.
- integrate thorough research
- do not directly tell the audience what action it should take. Rather, offer *background information* that the audience can use to make a decision. The Purdue OWL video mentions this principle. This is one reason the video refers to the white paper as a *backgrounder report*.

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How to Organize the White Paper:

Please include the following sections in your white paper:

- *Executive Summary*
- *Introduction*
- *Previous Approaches*
- *New Findings*
- *Conclusion*
- *References*

In the **Executive Summary**, summarize your research and your purpose. The executive summary should be a stand-alone document. It should be written in such a way that a busy executive could read the executive summary and know exactly what the paper is about without reading the rest of the paper.

In the **Introduction**, you lay the groundwork for your readers for the details that will be introduced in the white paper. If you need to define any terms, you will do so here. You might share an anecdote or illustration to describe why this topic is important.

In the **Previous Approaches** section, you will describe the approaches or strategies that have been previously used or are currently used on the topic. For example, if your white paper is being written to advertise a new taxi service in your area, you might review what transportation services are provided now. You could show the challenges or problems that the current services involve. In this section of the white paper, your use of sources will be very important. You should integrate research to show that the problems you have identified exist.

In the **New Findings** section, you present perhaps the most important information in the paper. In this section, you will describe the findings of your research and relate these findings to the purpose of your report. You will not only provide data and research, but you will also explain the data and research and why it is relevant to your report's topic.

For example, if your white paper is being written to advertise a new taxi service in your area, you might review what transportation services are provided now and show why the new taxi service fills a need that the current set of transportation services does not fill or solves a problem that the current set of transportation services does not solve. You will provide data and evidence for why the new taxi service has promise in solving the problems you have identified.

In this section of the white paper, your use of sources will be very important as well. You should integrate research to show that the problems you have identified will be solved by your new approach.

In the **Conclusion** section, you review what your research shows in light of the previous approaches used. You will not tell the audience what steps to take next. However, you will summarize what your findings articulate.

In the **References**, you will list your sources that you cited in the paper. You will list them in APA format. Please note that the lectures on white papers that you have viewed and examples of white papers you may have read may not have used APA format. You will be using APA format in this assignment.

You are required to have at least five sources for your paper. In addition, at least one of them is to have been acquired through UMGC Library OneSearch.

Primary sources will be very beneficial for the paper. For example, if your white paper is being written to advertise a new taxi service in your area, you might interview some local residents about the problems they have with the current transportation services in the area. The information in such interviews would be persuasive research to integrate into your white paper.

Length of the Paper:

Your white paper should be 1200-1600 words in length. Again, you are required to use at least five sources, with at least one of them being acquired through UMGC Library OneSearch.

Graphics:

Your white paper should incorporate at least three graphics. Graphics can include tables, charts, or graphs showing some research findings. They can also be images that are relevant to the topic of the white paper.

At least two of the graphics must be original. Original graphics can include photos taken by you or tables, charts, or graphs developed by you.

To see examples of graphics used in white papers, see the Purdue OWL video, "White Papers: An Introduction to the Genre and Its Expectations," at the 3:27 mark, at the 5:29 mark, at the 6:58 mark, at the 7:01 mark, at the 7:11 mark, at the 7:43 mark, and at the 7:58 mark.

Due Date:

Your instructor will notify you of the due date. You will write a first draft, your instructor will comment on the first draft, and you will submit a second draft using the comments as your guide.