

Project 3: Client-based Recommendation Report (with research)

Overview

Over the course of this semester, we have examined how rhetoric works in the multimedia of others (Project 1) and created multimedia of our own (Project 2). In this project, as well as in the project that follows, you will take what you have learned from the first half of the semester and use it in a “real” context. The first part of this assignment is for you and your team to create a “plan” in the form of a recommendation report.

A recommendation report is a report that identifies a problem and proposes potential solutions to that problem, generally concluding by identifying the best solution. Recommendation reports are usually prepared for organizational leadership with the goal of helping them understand the best ways of proceeding. The goal of a recommendation report is to persuasively present evidence—including evidence from research—that the proposed solution is the best one.

Your task

A local, small business (or nonprofit organization) in Greater Lafayette, Indiana, is planning on launching a new website from which to operate. Your team has been engaged as consultants to put together a recommendation report that shows analysis of important data that the business should consider as it designs its website and plans its release. You need to analyze the problem and make recommendations about the website, utilizing data to make recommendations about the website’s content and design.

Some data that you should consider:

- Market data (regarding location, products/services, etc.)
- Data about comparable websites
- Customer data
- Any other relevant (and convincing) data about website design, website traffic, factors that drive people to websites, etc.

This could be a small data set that is freely available, data that is found in an already produced chart or graph, or research articles and reports that discuss and analyze data sets related to your topic. The goal here is to learn to research and convey data-rich information effectively. Your recommendation report should use this data to convincing effect.

You should also include at least one element of **primary research**. This is research you conduct yourself through an interview, observations, or photographic documentation. You should incorporate data gathered from this research into your recommendation report.

Your report should also include **visual** and **design** elements that make it engaging for both readers who will read it in detail and for those who will skim it.

Deliverables

1. **Team charter (Exercise #7)** which describes the roles each team member will take, as well as present a plan of action for completing the project.
2. **Annotated Bibliography (Exercise #8):** this will present at least 4 potential sources (one of which is a data source), as well as your plan for completing primary research.
3. **Recommendation Report (80 points):** This will be a thoroughly researched and carefully designed document. You should include the following:
 - a. At least three visual representations of data to illustrate your points. The data points should also be discussed in the content of the report.
 - b. Other visual elements (illustrations, headings, design, etc.) to make it an appealing multimedia document and not just a wall of text.
 - i. You **must** include a Table of Contents, an Executive Summary, an Introduction, and a Conclusion. The rest of the sections are up to you.
 - c. A total of at least 10 **reliable secondary sources**. At least 5 of these must be **peer-reviewed** sources you have found through the Library or Google Scholar.
 - d. Information from at least one **primary source**. This information could come from an interview, observations, or use of photographic documentation (from pictures you took yourselves).
 - e. It should run 4-6 single-spaced pages, not counting a References page.Please note: if you want to do this same project in an alternative form (say, for example, as a website or a video), please reach out to me and we can discuss that alternative.
4. **A reflective memo/team evaluation (20 points)** in which you evaluate your work, describe the choices you made, and evaluate your team members' contributions. Please note that 10 of these points are based on how your team evaluates your work.

A note on collaboration

If anyone on your team is not pulling their weight, please let me know immediately. I will reach out to them. If they continue to not participate, this can result in serious deductions for their grade. Group work in professional settings is difficult, but it is extremely common. Don't expect to skate by and get the same grade as the rest of your group if you are not contributing.

Due Dates

All materials are due on the Sunday at the end of the week indicated by 11:59pm unless otherwise noted.

- Team Charter: End of Week 9
- Annotated Bibliography and Research Plan: End of Week 10
- Primary research: During Week 11
- Draft of Recommendation Report: End of Week 11
 - Peer Review will be Monday of Week 12
- Final Draft of Recommendation Report and Reflective Memo: Due Wednesday of Week 12 (I recognize this is fast turnaround, but the goal here is for me to be able to give you feedback before Friday when we start work on Project 4)