

Communication Proposal

As a communication consultant, you have been asked to provide an initial evaluation of a company or business's internal or external communications. It would be best to pick a company or business that you are very familiar with or have worked for (especially for internal communication). After researching the situation at your chosen company, write a proposal (in the form of a PowerPoint deck) to appropriate senior managers that accomplishes the following goals:

- a. Outlines and demonstrates the problems you have found with their internal or external communication (use specific examples). Address both design and content.
- b. Explains how these problems are hurting the business.
- c. Proposes solutions to these problems—address both design and content.
- d. Persuades them that your proposed solutions will improve their communications and outweigh the costs of implementing them.

To be successful on this assignment you will need to give strong, compelling evidence (demonstrations, facts, statistics, reasoning, examples, stories, studies, experts, etc.) to persuade the audience that they need to make a change and that the changes you propose will be the most effective.

Ideally, you will find samples of poorly designed, real documents (that are currently being used) to support your claims. This could include print advertisements, postcards, emails, memos, mailings, slides, charts, graphics, etc. These should be real documents, and you must integrate them appropriately into your proposal as figures or appendices. Discuss elements that we have covered in class such as audience analysis, communication analysis, content effectiveness, Plain English, reading for skimming, document design, and visual design.

Communication Proposal: Assignment Requirements

After you have finished your research on your client's current communications and your ideas for improvement, write a proposal to the client in the form of a PowerPoint deck explaining your recommendations and persuading the client to implement your ideas. Your client would like your slides to serve as a standalone document.

Remember the scenario. You are an outside communication consultant. Your selected company or business has hired you to do an initial assessment with recommendations for either its internal or external communications. Do one or the other. Do not do both internal and external communications. Unless you already work for the company you have selected, it will be very difficult to do internal communications.

Be Persuasive. There are actually two elements to the persuasion in this assignment. One: convince them in a tactful way that their current efforts need improvement. Show them the problems with what they are currently doing. Two: convince them that the changes you recommend will improve their business in a cost effective way. Be sure to address both content and design elements.

Use evidence: Remember in order to be persuasive in the business world, it takes more than just listing off a bunch of good ideas. Use examples, cite studies and statistics, quote experts, give demonstrations, tell stories, etc. The quality of your persuasion both to convince them that there is a problem and to sell them on your ideas will to a large part depend on the quality of the evidence you give and the research you have done. Cite your sources and include a bibliography.

Include actual examples of the problem communications and the improvements you recommend either in figures that you incorporate into the main slides (ideal) or in appendices (properly referenced) at the end of your proposal.

Design an easy to skim document. Remember summary headings, contexting clues, bulleted lists, etc.

Proofread. Don't ruin your excellent content with sloppy grammar/mechanics or difficult to read prose. Write in Plain English. Don't undermine your professionalism and credibility with errors.

Communication Analysis for the Proposal

Purpose: You want the client to implement your recommendations.

Audience: Your client. Note: the audience is not your instructor; it is the client company. The audience wants to improve internal or external communications in an effective and cost efficient way. This audience will be persuaded most effectively with compelling

examples, research, evidence, and logic. Remember, you may need to start by convincing the client that the current approach needs to be changed.

Persona: Professional and credible with expert knowledge on communications.

Message Strategies: Use persuasive evidence to convince your client to implement your recommendations. Support your points with examples, research, communications theory and practice, examples of other companies in similar situations, compelling logic, facts, statistics, and evidence.

Proposal content should include a clear description of your recommendations substantiated with examples, research and persuasive reasoning to convince your client to implement your communication plan. Some of the issues you will address:

- Prove viability and feasibility of your recommendations based on examples, research and logical reasoning.
- Use examples and stories to show your ideas have worked for other companies.
- Document the evidence you cite to support your recommendations.
- Show the benefits of your plan will outweigh the costs.

Cover email message should:

- Include a subject line.
- Be brief, about 3-5 sentences long.
- Show appreciation for the project.
- Refer readers to the attached proposal.
- Preview your recommendations.
- Invite questions.
- Have a tone that is courteous and professional.

Be sure that your deck includes the following:

- Slides printed one per page; with page numbers on each page, stapled or bound together with the cover email on top.
- A title slide with an interesting, informative title, your name, the client, and the date.
- An executive summary slide (labeled executive summary) that provides a comprehensive summary of your recommendations and the rationale for them.
- A summary-style, idea heading on each slide.
- Contexting clues that help the reader understand the organization—like repeating agendas.
- An agenda slide that previews the organization of the proposal.
- An introduction slide that briefly explains the current situation.
- Proposal slides that show the current problems, explain your recommendations, and provide a persuasive rationale for implementing your recommended course of action.
- A closing slide that asks for action, gives appropriate deadlines, and sums up.
- Additional information as needed in the notes sections or in an appendix.
- A bibliography slide.

Be persuasive: Remember the proposal is not simply informative. You must also **convince** your readers that your recommendations are the best ones to follow.

Do research to prove your case, cite your sources, and include a bibliography.

Use Plain English.

Make this a standalone document that readers can easily skim and understand.

Proposal Grading Criteria

Name _____ Section _____ Topic _____
Criteria critiqued on a +, √, – basis: + = Well-done; √ = OK but needs some work; – = Weak

_____ **Cover email message**

- Uses business email format with an informative subject line
- Briefly explains what is in the proposal—previews the recommendations
- Employs a polite, professional tone

_____ **Title slide**

- Uses an interesting and informative title that provides readers with a clear understanding of the document’s content
- Includes required names and dates

_____ **Executive summary slide**

- Provides a comprehensive summary of the recommendations—message, medium, and the rationale for this proposal—like an executive summary.

_____ **Agenda slide**—Previews organization of the report

_____ **Introduction slide**

- Provides enough background to show that action is needed

_____ **Proposal slides**

- Clearly shows the problems with current communications
- Clearly explains the recommended changes
- Gives before and after examples
- Provides evidence—research, facts, examples, statistics, cases, etc.—to support the recommendations
- Is persuasive
- Gives citations where necessary; includes a bibliography at the end
- Writes clearly, concisely in Plain English
- Includes additional information as needed in notes section or appendix.

_____ **Closing slide**—Sums up key points; stresses action and implementation

_____ **Structuring**

- Uses summary-style headings on all slides (executive summary)
- Uses contexting clues to help the reader follow the organization—like a running agenda
- Uses structuring to help with skimming and readability/understanding
- Creates a standalone, easy to read document
- Printed one slide per page with page numbers

_____ **Correctness**

- Has no misspellings
- Is grammatical