Using Design Principles in Rhetorical Analysis of a Business Document

What is my task?

Please complete a researched rhetorical analysis of a business document or artifact. You will need to complete both primary (looking at actual, raw documents) and secondary research. The research must be sufficient and credible. You should base your analysis in rhetorical and/or informational design theory. In other words, use theorists such as Robin Williams to help you analyze the documents.

What is a rhetorical analysis?

A rhetorical analysis examines an artifact that attempts to convey information through symbols from one human being to another. A classic rhetorical approach is to examine the ethos (credibility), logos (logic), or pathos (emotion) of a document in terms of a target audience. For instance, does the Dixie State University website effectively invite a diverse student population to enroll?

Consider the effectiveness of the design for a particular audience. What is the information meant to do? Does the information accomplish the task effectively? Why or why not?

Grading Criteria:

- Uses rhetorical and/or information design theory to guide the analysis. Names theorists and defines theories (such as Williams's CARP principles).
- Completes sufficient and credible research, using both primary and secondary sources. (No specific number of sources, but don't rely on Williams alone.)
- Cites sources using an appropriate citation style (usually MLA or APA)
- Considers the effectiveness of designs for particular audiences. In other words, the document fulfills its purpose.
- Mentions specific design elements such as (but not necessarily) repetition, contrast, alignment, and proximity
- Explains the purpose of the design and the audience(s) for the design.
- Explains the method of analysis.
- Report is well-organized and well-edited (you may work in Indesign OR Word but you must think about the design of the report—headings, margins, layout)
- Report is complete and is thorough (8 pages double-spaced is a tentative goal. It is hard for me to imagine that you could write an effective, well-formatted analysis in fewer pages, but as long as the analysis is thorough, there is no need to manipulate font or margins to get to 8 pages).