

Business 236, Management, Spring 2009  
Research Brief Assignment

Over this semester, your writing assignments have called on your skills in argument and analysis. In your team presentation assignment, you have also had to gather facts and lay out the most prominent evidence to illustrate a particular point. This assignment calls on all of those skills:

Please select a topic from the list below. Your assignment is to write a summary of current evidence and research describing that topic, in a paper of between 2,000 and 2,500 words.

- 1) A report on the current strategic position of a company, similar to what you did for the four companies in the strategy assignment. Choose any company listed on p. 138, Table 5.2, of the Griffin textbook, or another company that you wish (get my approval first).
- 2) An industry study. This would include main industry competitors, markets served, where and how companies compete with each other, sources of innovation, effects of different kinds of technologies, human resource management issues in that industry, and future prospects.
  - a. Management consulting
  - b. Grocery stores
  - c. Newspapers
  - d. Trucking
  - e. Truck manufacture
  - f. Pharmaceutical
  - g. An industry of your choice (with my approval)
- 3) Individual topics
  - a. Differences in “right-to-work” legislation between U.S. states
  - b. Leadership transitions at major U.S. companies in 2008
  - c. Nanotechnology and its impact on manufacturing
  - d. Groupware
  - e. Open source software
  - f. A literature review on an emerging issue in management
  - g. A management topic of your choosing (subject to approval). Please talk to me if you are interested in a topic not listed here.

Additional process and content issues that are part of this assignment:

- Please prepare a one paragraph proposal of your topic and submit it by March 30 for approval.
- A complete first draft is due April 24 at noon. No extensions will be permitted without penalty.
- The final paper is due at 8:30 a.m. on May 5. No extensions will be permitted without penalty.
- The paper must use at least five sources, at least four from published periodicals or web sites of those periodicals. You can’t entirely source your paper from web-only sites, blogs, etc.
- At least two of these papers must have been found via the Trexler Library’s databases.

Writing a business research paper may be a new experience for some of you. I will provide guidance in coming weeks to help you do the best job you can, and will share material on what makes a good research paper, including how to use Trexler Library’s resources.

I will evaluate the paper on the basis of:

- Good research and investigation (did you find the most relevant facts relating to your topic?)
- Cogent, clear analysis (did you draw appropriate conclusions from the facts you found?)
- Good structure (is the paper well organized and easy to follow?)
- Good presentation (writing mechanics, appearance)