

Format for GSCM Research Project¹

The following is a guideline to be used when writing your GSCM Research Project. Remember that as you develop the project you should be building upon what was already done and making the connections between sections clear to the reader. It is expected that proper citation form will be used throughout the project when referencing the research of other authors. **Your research question(s) needs to be clearly stated (in bold) and all sections of the paper will relate to some aspect of the stated research question(s).**

Title Page: The title page should include the title of the project along with the name of the organization that was interviewed. Also included on the title page should be the name of the author of the research project along with all pertinent information.

Table of Contents: The table of contents lists the information contained in the project in the order in which it will be found. All major topics of interest should be listed.

Executive Summary: The executive summary should be a one to two page overview of the information contained in the research project. It should give the reader an easy reference, in very brief form, to the important information contained in the project and explained in more detail in the body of the project. People attending a presentation of research or reading the project will use this section as a reference during presentations and as a synopsis of the research done.

Introduction: The introduction should contain a brief overview of the problem being addressed and the background information needed for the reader to understand the work being done and the reasoning behind it. **Your research question(s) also need to be clearly stated, in bold, in this section.** After reading the introduction, the reader should know exactly what the project is about, why the research was conducted, and how this research adds to the knowledge that the reader may have about the topic.

Literature Review (Academic Research): This section will contain all of the information that was collected through the review of existing information. Peer reviewed journals are the preferred (and expected) sources of information while peer reviewed "trade journals" are considered to be adequate sources of information. Books are also considered to be adequate sources of information. The importance of the literature review as it pertains to each of the research questions must be made clear to the reader. Conclusions should be drawn in a logical fashion and insight into how these conclusions will be used throughout the rest of the research agenda should be provided.

Qualitative Research (Empirical Research): This section should contain all information regarding any interviews that were conducted as part of the research project. This section should begin with an explanation of why this research is needed or beneficial. Other information provided should include:

¹ Modified from Professor Curran's research report format found at <http://web.bryant.edu/~jcurran/Report.html>

- An overview of the issues that were included in this research
- Why these issues were salient
- How the discussion guide (interview questions list) was developed
- A description of the interviewee and the company being researched
- Discussion of the information collected (using quotes to highlight important points)
- Conclusions based on the collected information
- Clear explanation of how the conclusions are based on the research done
- How these conclusions will contribute to the rest of the research project

Findings: The findings are the actual results of your research. Your findings should consist of a detailed presentation of your interpretation of the results found when comparing the writings from the literature review to the qualitative research (How well does the real world compare to the academic world?). Figures are encouraged when it is helpful to allow the reader to more easily understand the work being presented. The findings section should include the following:

- Findings based only on results of the research, not speculation
- In-depth explanation of all major findings
- Clear presentation of support for the findings
- Clear answers to each of the research questions

Limitations: Recognize that even the best research work is not perfect and open to questioning. In this section, briefly discuss the factors that may have influenced your findings but were outside of your control. Some of the limitations may be time constraints, budget constraints, market changes, certain procedural errors, and other events. Admit that your research is not perfect but discuss the degree of accuracy with which your results can be accepted. In this section, suggestions can be offered to correct these limitations in future research.

Conclusions and Recommendations: Conclusions are broad generalizations that focus on addressing the research questions for which the project was conducted. Recommendations are your choices for strategies or tactics based on the conclusions that you have drawn. Quite often authors are tempted to speculate on outcomes that cannot be supported by the research findings. Do not draw any conclusions or make any recommendations that your research cannot clearly support.

References: This section should be a listing of all existing information sources used in the research project. It is important to allow the reader to see all of the sources used and enable the reader to further explore those sources to verify the information presented.

Appendices: This section should include all supporting information from the research project that was not included in the body of the project. The information presented in this section is important to support the work presented in the body of the project but would make it more difficult to read and understand if presented within the body of the project. Don't simply fill this section with graphs, charts, brochures, pamphlets or any other information that was not referred to in the body of the project.