

Instructions for Graded Writing Assignment 3: Short Report

Readings:

- Lesikar's Chapter 11, pages 339-359
- Sample Short Report, pages 350-358
- Lesikar, Appendix B, pages 615-620

Instructions:

For this final Graded Writing Assignment, you will compose a Short Report based on one of the scenarios outlined below. You must choose one of the scenarios listed below; papers submitted reflecting a scenario other than those listed below (even those listed in your text) will not be given credit or graded.

Assignment Requirements:

Write your findings as a well-organized Short Report containing the following key elements:

- A title page
- Document headings to separate parts of the report
- At least two sources with brief in-text citations as shown in sample Short Report (pages 350-358)¹
- Interpretation of your findings in terms of their likely significance to you and your readers.

Assignment Notes:

- Create all pieces of the short report as one (1) document.
- The Short Report should be 1,200-1,500 words in length. Remember to focus on content, not just writing to fill a word requirement.
- You will upload your finished document to the appropriate assignment in Business Communications. Instructions on how to upload are available in the Topic 12 assignment area.

Scenarios:

Option 1) The graphic design shop where you work as the account manager is doing well. Just last year, the owner hired three new designers and a receptionist, bringing the total number of employees to 14. But with growth comes certain headaches, and one of them is figuring out how to regulate employees' Internet use. Currently, employees can download anything they want from the Internet and view any web site they wish.

The owner's IT person has alerted him to several problems. One is that the designers are downloading any and all software that they think sounds "cool" —even software in beta

¹ Please note that the sample shown in your book is a Mid-length Report and therefore contains some sections that you will not need for the Short Report. For instance, you will not need the letter of transmittal or the executive summary.

versions that still have a lot of kinks. As a result, their computers lock up or malfunction, and the IT person has to spend hours troubleshooting the problem to get it resolved.

Two, there is concern over what Internet sites employees are viewing, specifically those that are inappropriate for the workplace. Overall, the IT person is worried about security breaches resulting from these downloads, inappropriate web site visits, and other Internet activities.

It's time for a policy to be developed governing Internet-use, and your boss thinks you're just the person to help write it. Your assignment is to study the current wisdom on workplace Internet policies and send your findings to your boss and the IT person as a short report, including a proposed Internet-use policy that might be implemented.

Option 2) As a Senior Buyer at Darcy's, a national department store, Sasha Warner manages the buyers in the eastern U.S. region. You're currently working under her as a sales co-op student. She drops by your office to chat one day and brings up a subject she's been wondering about. "Do you know anything about Skype?" she asks. You nod, having used this online international phone service yourself. "I heard it's totally free and really easy to use," she continues, "so I'm thinking about recommending that all my buyers subscribe to it. Then maybe they could talk to each other and to international designers and merchandisers more easily. Is there any downside? Maybe security issues?" You're not sure--but you offer to look into the matter for her.

Do the necessary research, and, if you haven't yet done so, try this service yourself and then write Sasha a report giving her the information she needs to decide whether or not to pursue this idea further. She may want to share your report with other managers in the company, so be sure you give it your best effort.

Option 3) You work for the owner of three local coffee and tea shops, one of which opened a few months ago. The newest one has already developed quite a nice, regular clientele, mostly those in or near the neighborhood who want an alternative to the big-coffee-chain experience, but your boss thinks its sales need a bump. She is considering holding an in-store promotion at the coffee shop – her first ever. Since she knows you're an Internet whiz, she turns to you for help. "How do you run one of these events?" she wants to know. "How much do they cost? Are they worth the effort and expense? What are my options? Do such promotions have lasting effects? How can I maximize the results?"

You turn to the Internet and find a lot of great stuff about in-store promotions, so much, in fact, that you decide to present your findings to your boss in writing. Tell her what she needs and wants to know in a clear, well organized report. Having the information in writing will also be helpful if she wants to share it with other employees. Be sure she can go to your sources and read more if she wants to.

Option 4) Many managers today are realizing that there really is something distinctive about "Gen Y," or "Millennial," employees (the children of the "baby boomers"--who were themselves children of the World War II generation). Find a real client or invent a realistic company to use

as your client. Then review the literature on Gen Y employees and write your client a report in which you describe the distinctive traits of this segment of the workforce and recommend ways to recruit, manage, and retain them.

Option 5) Your company does not offer flexible spending accounts (FSAs) for its employees. Your boss wonders if your company (you pick the name) should. Are FSAs a good idea for businesses and employees? Prepare a report for your boss in which you analyze the advantages and disadvantages of FSAs so that she can decide whether to offer FSAs to your employees.