

Workplace Cultures Project

Description: A workplace culture report invites you to learn more about your future profession and offers you an opportunity to make an important contact in your field. In this assignment, you will work with a real professional contact to better understand the communication practices and demands of your selected profession. For this project, you will create an email of intent, a resume, report, and a thank-you email. This project aims to provide you with the opportunity to learn more about your field while making a significant contact. In this assignment you will learn to

- Analyze professional cultures and social contexts to determine the purposes that written documents serve.
- Comprehend the construction of professional and/or organizational identities through persuasive and ethical writing practices.
- Evaluate and use information resources to develop and produce ethically responsible professional documents.
- Use appropriate research methods to meet project goals.
- Develop strategies for planning, researching, and developing documents that effectively respond to professional situations.
- Develop strategies for written and/or oral communication with peers, instructors, users and/or clients that foster an ethic of mutual respect and responsibility.

Components: interview with transcript, resume with confirmation email, formal report, and thank-you email.

1-Interview with transcript

Preparation—the interviewee: Prior to the interview, you must research a site and establish a client contact. Your contact person is an important first step in creating a successful report. You should begin by brainstorming a list of sites and organizations related to your chosen profession. Those sites need to be local so that you may visit with a local contact for that organization. After you have brainstormed a list of sites and organizations, begin researching them to narrow down your choices. You want to find a client contact at your selected site, and thus, you will need access to contact information. Use these criteria in selecting a site and contact person:

- Site must be local and in a geographical location that affords you access.
- Site must be related to your chosen profession and field.
- Site must provide you with permission to visit.
- Contact person must *not* be a relative or close friend.
- Contact person must be a member of your chosen profession.
- Contact person must be amenable to a 1-hour interview and follow-up email contact from you.
- Contact person must be willing to discuss his or her professional life and communication practices.
- Contact person must understand that your visit is for a course project and be

willing to help you in achieving the project's goals by providing information.

After you have determined a prioritized list of sites and contacts, you should talk to your contact person explaining the scope of this project and asking for a 1-hour interview. You must explain the tight timeline for the course and secure the interview right away. You also may want to have a back-up client just in case.

Preparation: the questions. Prior to developing your workplace cultures report, you should conduct at least one interview with a member of your future profession. You should be prepared to ask the contact about his or her background in the field (education, career trajectory, on-job training, etc.), his or her duties and responsibilities, his or her workplace communication practices, and other issues related to his or her profession. Depending upon your contact and the site, you also may want to collect internal and external documents related to the contact's role and your site. Your goals for this interview are threefold:

1. to gain useful and relevant data about your contact and profession.
2. to guide other aspects of your research process.
3. to establish a professional contact

Some points to consider:

- Avoid asking questions for which you already have adequate answers.
- Have at least six well-developed questions, but don't let these questions stifle the natural flow of the conversation.
- Listen carefully to the responses and ask follow-up questions based upon the interviewee's interests and concerns.
- Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.
- Avoid asking questions that are too broad.
- Avoid starting the interview with questions that are too narrow.
- Avoid asking leading questions that assume a particular answer and discourage the interviewee from voicing alternative interests/concerns

Some sample questions:

What do you consider professional communication in your job/field? Examples?

What portion of your job involves written communication? (What types?) Verbal communication? (Describe in depth.)

What are some of the constraints placed on your writing in this job?

What technologies affect your written and verbal communication?

For whom do you write? How many audiences do you have when you write?

Who edits your work? How often do you revise your written work before it's ready to send out?

Who approves your written work before it leaves your office?

What types of writing do you compose individually? What types are composed collaboratively?

How did your education prepare you for the communication tasks (written and verbal) your job requires?

How has your company prepared you for your current communication tasks?

Were there any surprises in your job requirements/descriptions?

Do you have any advice concerning how to prepare for my first (or next) job after college?

Note: Make sure to add questions that interest you about the person, his or her job, and the field.

2-Résumé and confirmation email: The development of your print-based résumé should be guided by our class discussion. Do not use a Word template to design your resume! Keep in mind that a traditional print-based résumé follows a relatively conventional set of guidelines, but those guidelines must be adapted to your own unique situation. The day before your interview, you will email your contact and me to confirm the day, date, time, and location of your interview. You also will attach your resume to that correspondence for your contact's consideration.

Required sections of your résumé: Your resume should include the following sections, but not necessarily in the order provided here. The ordering of your accomplishments should be based upon your best analysis of the job context.

- Contact information
- Profile section (Review chapter 8 of Asher)
- Education
- Professional Experience
- Activities, Honors, and/or Memberships (or other such category)

Remember you must determine how these sections will be developed and positioned on your résumé, and I would be happy to consult with you about those decisions.

Formatting your resume: Your résumé should closely follow the guidelines established in the formatting reference sheet in terms of font choices and white space. The formatting, however, must also be adapted to your particular job search. White paper, black laser jet printing, and a reasonable grid set-up of your résumé, however, are required. Font sizes, emphases, and faces should be selected for readability, tone, and transferability. Headings must be used to denote subsections of your résumé, and you should be certain to create a consistent design. Once again, do not use Word templates for your resume--develop the design yourself.

3-Formal report: Your report should offer insights into your professional culture and the communication practices of one of its representatives. You should write your report offering details about your contact and site, your research process, and most importantly what you learned about your professional culture and communication practices.

Content: You should determine the significant issues you learned through your research with your contact person, his or her documents, and your professional context. After analyzing your own interview transcript, consider what you learned from your contact. Also, seek out documents that represent the type of professional culture you will enter. What issues are most intriguing to you about workplace communication in your selected field? Establish those issues and look for specific examples of those issues. Create an outline for your report based on those issues.

- title page: separate title page including the title of your report, your name, submission date, and appropriate graphic.
- abstract: create an executive summary for your report. This summary should be the first section of your report, but you should write it after you have developed the rest of your report. (You can't effectively summarize what you haven't written).
- observations/issues: what communication and professional issues stand out from your research? What have you learned about authority? power? language? What have you learned about professional preparation? about technologies of writing? about verbal and written communication? What ethical or legal issues came into focus? Be certain to select 2-3 themes and develop them carefully.
- recommendations: after conducting your research, what plans do you have to effectively prepare for written and verbal communication in your field? What can you do to enhance your rhetorical skills? Based upon the issues, how will you negotiate the communicative demands of your employer and field?
- conclusions: what have you learned about communication practices in your field?

Format: Using Microsoft Word, your report should follow these specifications: as many pages as necessary; 1-inch margins on all sides; separate title page including the title of your report, your name, submission date, and appropriate graphic; descriptively titled subheadings; level-one headings in font of your choice; level-two headings in font of your choice; body text in font of your choice; name, last updated information, and page number in footer; appropriate use of graphics and appendices.

4-Thank-you email: In order to demonstrate your appreciation for your contact's participation in the workplace cultures project, you will create an email of thanks. This email should specifically explain how the contact helped you in this project and what you learned from working with him or her. As your contact-researcher relationship is coming to an end, your message should leave the client feeling reward by your interactions. You will first draft this email in a Word document, and then send the final revision at the end of the semester after you have completed the project. You should ensure that your email is professional.

How can I learn more about different unit 3 project components? Aspects of this project are covered through the following supplemental resources: **emails** email etiquette <http://www.emailreplies.com/> **resume workshop** purdue's online writing lab <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResumeW/> **reports** writing reports <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/service/ltl/campus/reportwr.pdf>