

# Proposal Memo to the Decision-maker

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## Summary of assignment

- **Task:** You will complete the following:
  - Identify the decision-maker or group of decision-makers to whom you will write this memo.
  - Consider the secondary research you conducted on your topic for writing assignment #2.
  - Consider what primary research you will need to conduct for your research-based report.
  - Write a proposal memo to your decision-maker asking for permission to conduct this research.
- **Length:** One page
- **Format:** A template for the memo is provided below.

*This proposal memo is a preliminary step you take* prior to writing your final paper, which is the research-based report. Your final paper in WRTG 394 will be a report in which you:

- define a problem in your workplace or community persuasively and accurately.
- propose a solution or solutions to the problem or issue.

As part of defining the problem and proposing a solution, you must conduct **primary** research. You might also need to conduct some additional secondary research. In this assignment, the proposal to conduct research, *you are persuading a decision-maker or group of decision-makers to authorize you to begin conducting this research that will end up in your final report.*

The main purposes of the research proposal memo are to accomplish the following:

- Demonstrate that the problem you've identified for the final project is significant enough to warrant investigation.
- Present a feasible plan or blueprint for your research.
- Set forth potential benefits to the organization or community from the research that justify the use of time and resources.

## Template for Submitting Your Memo

*Note: Please use the format outlined below, including the headers provided in bold, for the memo.*

To: [Decision Maker Name(s) and title(s)]  
From: [Your Name and title]  
Date: [Today's Date]  
Subject: Request to Conduct Research on [...]

### **Summary**

[Write one or two sentences in which you mention why you are writing this memo.]

### **What the Problem Is and Why It Needs to Be Investigated**

[In a series of paragraphs, describe the problem to which you are going to propose a solution and explain why you think this problem is important.]

### **What Secondary Research I Have Conducted about the Problem**

[In one paragraph describe secondary research you have conducted on the problem and solution.]

### **What Primary Research I Will Conduct about the Problem**

[In a series of paragraphs, describe primary research you will conduct on the problem and solution.]

### **Why We Will Benefit from My Research and Recommendations**

[In one or two paragraphs, describe your recommendations to the problem/situation you are describing. Include a description of the potential benefits that your organization or community will incur by authorizing your research and considering your recommendation.]

### **Conclusion**

[In one or two sentences, conclude your memo by repeating the request for authorization and reminding of the benefits of your conducting the research and considering your recommendations.]

## Advice on Conducting Primary Research

When considering primary research, consider the strategies outlined in the following material from weeks 3 and 4:

- “Strategies for Qualitative Interviews – Harvard University” (from week 3)
- “Designing Effective Questions and Questionnaires” (from week 3)
- “Writing Interview Protocols and Conducting Interviews” (from week 4)

Consider the following examples:

- If you are proposing that email be used less frequently for communication and that another application be used to improve communication, you might interview fellow employees on the situation, and you might take screen captures of alternative communication tools to illustrate how they work and would improve communication in your office.
- For a report on proposing a new traffic light, you might take pictures of the intersection where such a traffic light could be built, and you might interview residents to get their perspective on the traffic light idea.
- For a report to the program chair of your major at UMUC suggesting changes to the curriculum, you might interview or survey fellow students, interview or survey hiring managers in the field, and/or interview or survey students who are majoring in the same field at another institution.
- For a report on recycling facilities, you might take pictures of the office environment to show that current recycling facilities are inadequate, and you might interview fellow workers about whether they find it easy to recycle materials at your office.

## Examples of How to Make Topics Specific for the Final Report in WRTG 394

- If you wish to write a report to your supervisor at work suggesting that email be used less frequently for communication and that another application, such as texting, be used to improve communication, you cannot simply prepare a report on the benefits of texting in the workplace. You must establish that your specific office has problems in communicating by email and indicate the benefits of using alternative communication systems, such as texting, for your workplace environment.
- If you write a report to your neighborhood community association that a traffic light be posted at a particular intersection, you cannot simply prepare a report on the benefits of traffic safety. You must show that the specific intersection in your neighborhood needs a traffic light in order to improve safety.

- If you write a report to the program chair of your major at UMUC recommending changes to the curriculum, you cannot simply prepare a report on the benefits of a certain class. You must show that the specific curriculum for your major at UMUC lacks something that your suggested adjustment will provide.
- If you write a report on recycling facilities at your workplace, you cannot simply prepare a report on the benefits of recycling. You must show that the recycling facilities at your specific workplace are inadequate or need improving.