

Task 1: Identify and understand requests from upper management

Here is the background information on my task

I am a first-year accounting associate within Koch's Consumer Products division at Georgia-Pacific. Part of my role is to work directly with senior leadership to support their accounting questions and needs. The financial information me provide often helps leaders strategize and make more informed business decisions year-round. This morning you received the following email from Mark Saigon, VP of Consumer Product Sales:

Good morning,

I was reviewing my monthly Excel reporting package and noticed that my department has gone through a large part of our SG&A (Selling, General, and Administrative Expenses) budget for the year. I am very concerned about this as it is only April and the department spent 15% more this quarter than last. What is going on? How are we so over budget already?

Is one region specifically driving up costs, or is it spread across my department? I want to get ahead of this before my quarterly budget vs. actuals review next week.

This is urgent, so please get back to me with your findings by EOD. If we need to change something in our department, I need that to roll out today.

Best,

Mark Saigon

VP Consumer Product Sales

Based on the email above, identify what information is needed to understand what Mark needs from the accounting department. Think about how I can provide the most succinct and thorough report in time for Mark's deadline.

Now that I've been assigned this task use this time to organize my need to be more efficient in providing Mark with an answer. Write myself an internal memo to identify what information is needed to answer Mark's questions. Outline the purpose of the memo and use the following questions as prompts to help you:

Koch Industries

Georgia-Pacific

Internal Memo

The purpose of this internal memo is to identify why the Georgia-Pacific Consumer Products division has a higher-than-expected SG&A budget.

The goal is to answer the following questions:

What do you know?

- I understand that the division is unexpectedly ahead of the budget and spending more this quarter than in past quarters.

What information or data sets do you need as an accountant?

- I will need to see a copy of the P&L by quarter to review the variance from this quarter to the previous ones. Upon review, I may also need the general ledger details of specific accounts within SG&A. This will help answer Mark's question regarding if a particular region is spending more.

What questions require further analysis?

- I would have to understand which accounts are driving the increased spending and possibly create a pivot table with the general ledger detail to identify any patterns as to why.

What is the most effective way to communicate my findings to Mark?

- Once I have the data, I can communicate to Mark in an email with a high-level understanding of what is driving costs. I think the bullet point format is clear, and I will offer a meeting at the end of my email should he wants to discuss this issue in more detail.