

To: ENGR 595a Students
From: Elizabeth Fife
Associate Professor, Viterbi Engineering Writing Program
Date: March 8, 2018
Re: ENGR 595A WRITING ASSIGNMENT 3

SITUATION

You're nearing the end of your internship. Your supervisor, is very impressed with your work and has recommended that you be brought back after you graduate from USC. She thinks you have a bright future.

As your final project as an intern, you have been asked to participate in your company's "Blue Sky" thinking initiative. This is a chance to suggest directions and applications for your company that are out of the mainstream of thinking. "Blue Sky Research" suggests study of ideas that are not limited by cost or the need for immediate practical application. This kind of research can sometimes have unforeseen results. The initiative's goal is for your company to have a positive impact on an issue facing society. While you might not completely "solve" a problem, at the very least you can use the company's strengths to engage with the problem.

Kari Kern and her superiors feel you're the perfect person to make this proposal because of your previous examination of ethics and your interest in technology. Due to your exploration of technology and its potential impact on society (via the second writing assignment), you are even more qualified to make some good suggestions.

The proposal should focus on an important social issue in your home country or a country you feel is in need of new thinking. This could be anything: homelessness, poverty, lack of access to educational opportunity, lack of clean water, an apathetic citizenry, the environment, domestic violence, racism, the digital divide... any social issue you find important.

As an example, you might propose that Google increase its participation in efforts to address the digital divide. Include some thoughts about how the company could promote the cause by raising awareness, develop programs, support internet access in schools, offer technical training, set up partnerships, etc. You can also utilize your insights from your expertise in your field – electrical engineering, computer science, etc.

As your "final project" for them, prepare a brief proposal that concisely and persuasively discusses an idea for your company to address. The expectation is that your suggestions will be innovative and ambitious.

TASK

There are two components to this assignment:

1. A memo
2. Sample presentation slides (2 slides should show data)

You are to write an informative and persuasive proposal to your supervisor (which, if approved, will be passed on to the company's leadership). Your goal is to introduce your "blue sky" idea and show its possibilities. Details of implementation are not necessary at this time.

Your memo should include:

- A summary paragraph of your proposal.
- An examination of the social issue and its impact on your home country or any country of interest.
- A brief summary of an article or website on the topic (to provide context and support for your proposal).
- The identification and discussion of your bold idea of what innovations you would like to see implemented.
- How the social issue and its effects will be impacted by the innovation (and, hence, your company). How will this benefit the company in the end?
- A closing paragraph that summarizes the excitement and importance of your proposal.

A few notes:

- The memo should be no more than three pages and should be addressed to Kari Kern
- Focus on writing clear, concise paragraphs.
- Don't go into great detail. Keep it simple.

Also, you will be asked to give a presentation in support of your proposal. Your supervisor would like to see your PowerPoint (or other program) slides to make sure you're on the right path. Submit 5 slides (not including your title slide) that you would use to present your idea.

Bring a rough draft (hardcopy) of your memo to class on April 20

The memo and slides are due via the course dropbox by 5PM on April 27

ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Please note the following specifications for this assignment.

Assignments Specifics:

- Due via course dropbox by 5PM on April 27
- Include Statement of Originality
- Word limit of 750 words
- Use the posted memo format.

Main Criteria for Success:

1. Proposal

- Opening Summary/Rationale
- Identification of Social Issue
- Inclusion and Summary of Supporting Article, Book, or Website
- Description of Impact to Society and Company
- Examples of Application of Technology
- Clarity
- Conciseness/Directness
- Audience-appropriate Tone

2. PowerPoint Slides

- Visual Interest
- Use of White Space
- Not Overwhelming Text
- Consistency
- Progression of Ideas