

Professional Communications II - Written Examination Pre-Negotiation Recommendation Report

Length: 6-8 pages – Not including cover page or appendices. **DUE:** Monday 11 May 2020 (14:00)

READ: Materials on Canvas; the Exam info on Inspira; the notes for the negotiation party you represent.

SCENARIO:

The owners of Ideas Unlimited, a web-design company, are concerned about recent events regarding idea ownership and intellectual property protection. They wish to begin negotiations with their web-design staff about measures to protect company ideas. Unfortunately, the Web-design staff feel the idea of a proposed ‘confidentiality agreement’ sends the wrong message regarding trust and rights to use their own ideas freely. They are also concerned about workload impacting negatively on creativity.

After a hastily convened first meeting, where tempers became heated, the owners hired a third party consultancy (HRM Consultants) to negotiate with web-design staff representatives. The aims of the negotiation include bringing to the table owner concerns regarding risks to the company’s so-called ‘intellectual property’. Additionally, the owners want HRM to hear and address the concerns of their web-designers regarding the ‘confidentiality agreement’. From the negotiation the owners hope to reach an agreement on ‘confidentiality agreement’ terms. They wish to appear willing to find a mutually beneficial, win-win solution to the issue.

You are **EITHER** one of the owners of **Ideas Unlimited (IU)** advising your representatives from HRM Consultants **OR** a web-design employee representing all web-designers at **IU** (see confidential roles). **CHOOSE ONE PARTY ONLY** to represent. (Use the given confidential info on that party to inform your response). Prepare a ‘Recommendation Report’ regarding the best course of action for the upcoming negotiations. **Discuss and evaluate two recommendation alternatives** to consider in the negotiation; and recommend a final course of action. There are a number of possible recommendations, nonetheless, prioritize and focus on two only, and **evaluate according to the same set of three criteria** (similar to the Recommendation Report submitted earlier this semester).

The aim overall is to present a final recommendation regarding the introduction of a ‘confidentiality agreement’ and management of other issues. You are aiming for a win-win outcome that protects the future interests of the company and ‘expands the pie’.

Read the case study and confidential roles carefully. You may also research and reference information related to company protection of intellectual property and strategies for maintaining positive, trusting relations with employees and building company loyalty and morale.

WRITE:

Web-designers: You will write a Recommendation Report for the web-designer representatives who will be meeting with HRM consultants (representing the owners of Ideas Unlimited) in an upcoming negotiation regarding the above-mentioned ‘confidentiality agreement’ and other issues. In the report you will explain and evaluate two possible recommendations to resolve the issue. From the two options, decide on one recommended course of action that your web-design representatives should negotiate.

Ideas Unlimited Owners: You will write a Recommendation Report for HRM consultants presenting your viewpoint for an upcoming negotiation regarding the ‘confidentiality agreement’ and other issues. HRM will represent you (the Owners) in a negotiation meeting with the Ideas Unlimited web-design staff representatives, In the report you will explain and evaluate two possible recommendations to help resolve the issue and propose a final recommendation.

REMINDER: In the previous recommendation report, some of you had poor formatting (extra spaces, wild fonts, inconsistent look of pages compared to others), some were actually missing required parts of a recommendation report, and others did not analyze the material. All of these problems will affect your grade on this assignment. Stick to task instructions and you can do well.

In particular, please take note of the assessment criteria outlined below. In particular, as discussed extensively in class, **be sure to reference appropriately**. Some **very clear and specific information and guidance on appropriate referencing style may be found on the HIOF website** for students. Please ask fellow students and/or myself if you need further guidance in this area.

** Important: All reports must be completed and submitted alone. No group reports.*

Context for Recommendation Reports

Recommendation reports are detailed documents written directly to clients/executives/committees, and, as their name suggests, they make recommendations for taking action on some issue of importance. Recommendation reports are built on detailed research, which may include field observations, client interviews, document analysis, surveys, and any other means of gathering information that might prove useful. Recommendation reports are often written by individuals or a team of consultants who complete the research and write the report collaboratively.

Parts of a Recommendation Report

Title Page (and subtitle)

Summary

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview

1.2 Background

1.3 Scope and Approach

2.0. Recommendation Alternatives

2.1 Recommendation One: Evaluated/analyzed according above-mentioned criteria

2.1.1 Criterion One

2.1.2 Criterion Two

2.1.3 Criterion Three

2.2 Recommendation 2 analyzed by the same criteria

2.2.1 Criterion One

2.2.2 Criterion Two

2.2.3 Criterion Three

3.0 Conclusion

4.0 Final Recommendation

5.0 References/bibliography

6.0 Appendices

Parts of a Recommendation Report, explained

Please note that “client” should be replaced with either “IU Owners” or “Web-designers” throughout the explanation below

Title Page:

Include the title of the report, the name of the client for whom the report has been written, the authors’ names, the date.

Summary:

Here you present a one- or two-paragraph summary of the report placed after the title page and before the ‘Table of contents’. The summary should stand alone, (no reference to figures or tables in the text) and present the most important **results and decisions** of the work.

Table of Contents:

This lays out the structure of the report. Headings and subheadings, etc., and the correlating page numbers.

Introduction

- **Overview:** A brief description of the report, including a general analysis of the client's needs and the proposed responses to those needs.
- **Background:** Information about the research conducted and sources considered when formulating the recommendations. Naturally, people like to know the foundations of the recommendations.
- **Scope and Approach:** Explain how broad the report might be (perhaps mentioning the recommendation alternatives to be evaluated) and if you will use any theoretical or methodological approaches to your analysis. *This is a good place to explain your criteria.*
- **Recommendation Alternatives:** Describe the various recommendations you will handle in the negotiation. These do not have to be in depth, just enough for the reader to recognize them when they come up in the body of the report.

Body: (Follow the numerical structure above)

- **Recommendation Alternatives:** Divide recommendations into sub-headings (see above example) so that the client will not miss any. Recommendations should be realistic, given the client’s resources, and achievable with a reasonable amount of work and time. Often each recommendation contains three components: (1) a brief description of the recommendation, including how it may help the client meet goals; (2) a rationale and explanation for the recommendation, including pros and cons according to a consistent set of evaluation criteria and (where relevant) (3) an action plan describing exactly what steps the client needs to take to put the recommendations into play.

Conclusion:

- **Conclusions:** Conclude the overall findings of the study by summarizing main points
 - **Final Recommendation:** Explain clearly what course of action the committee recommends. Be specific
 - **List of Sources:** Properly cite all the sources used in writing your report, and also provide your client with a list “for further reading,” if necessary. Chances are that your client will want to verify and learn more about your recommendations. Giving them a head start will further demonstrate your commitment to them.
 - **Appendixes:** Include further instructions, samples, glossaries, illustrations, and diagrams in one or more appendixes. Each type of supplemental information should have its own appendix.
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Assessment Criteria

- **Task Response** – The candidate response demonstrates:
 - Relevance and reflection
 - Development of ideas including reference to the given text and referencing of sources where relevant
 - Appropriate address of audience and purpose and appropriate tone and register
 - Referencing – research and reference of sources related to the topic issues
- **Coherence and Cohesion** – The candidate response demonstrates:
 - Adherence to appropriate structure and format for the set task (Report Recommendation)
 - Effective use of linking terms and cohesive devices
 - Fluent expression
- **Lexical Resource** – The candidate response demonstrates:
 - Effective use of a broad and varied vocabulary appropriate to the task
 - Effective use of relevant terminology
 - Appropriate word selection and nuance
 - Spelling
- **Grammatical Range and Accuracy** – The candidate response demonstrates:
 - Clear, fluent expression
 - Appropriate sentence structure including word order
 - Preference for active form
 - Varied sentence length
 - Accurate grammar and punctuation

General, qualitative description of valuation criteria

A – Excellent

An excellent performance, clearly outstanding. The candidate demonstrates excellent judgement and a high degree of independent thinking.

B – Very good

A very good performance. The candidate demonstrates sound judgement and a very good degree of independent thinking.

C – Good

A good performance in most areas. The candidate demonstrates a reasonable degree of judgement and independent thinking in the most important areas.

D – Satisfactory

A satisfactory performance, but with significant shortcomings. The candidate demonstrates a limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.

E – Sufficient

A performance that meets the minimum criteria, but no more. The candidate demonstrates a very limited degree of judgement and independent thinking.

F – Fail

A performance that does not meet the minimum academic criteria. The candidate demonstrates an absence of both judgement and independent thinking.

(General grading - Norwegian Council for Higher Education used in University and University Colleges - <https://www.uhr.no/temasider/karaktersystemet/karakterbeskrivelser/>)