

Freshman Business Connections
Business Writing Proficiency Exercise
Aug 2015

Due Date: 11:59 pm, Oct 5, 2015

Final Date for Revised Submissions: 11:59, Oct 14, 2015

Purpose: This assignment is designed with three primary goals: First, writing a business brief will introduce you to professional writing, including concepts like audience, purpose, and the conventions of style in a business setting. Second, this assignment allows you to demonstrate your ability to think critically and to synthesize several different sources together into a recommendation that is more than just a summary of the information. Finally, the third objective of this assignment is to evaluate the writing of the freshman class as a whole to determine where you and your peers' writing is strongest and weakest. This will help the Sam M. Walton College and the Business Communication Center develop resources that will prepare you for writing as a professional.

Assignment: Imagine that you work for a large international company. The board of directors is considering creating an official employee diversity policy. They have asked you to research current thinking about business diversity programs and also to investigate the policies of other large companies. They have asked you to write a business brief (around 750 to 1000 words), in which you address two major questions:

1. "Should we make diversity a priority at all?"

Your company has always valued diversity, and its bylaws include provisions designed to encourage minority recruitment. Therefore, some of the board members don't think an explicit policy is necessary. They think things are fine the way they are.

Use the research provided to explain why diversity is or is not important to a company's success. Cite specific research that supports your recommendation.

2. "If we create an official diversity policy, what kinds of programs or initiatives should we include to make it most effective?"

On the other hand, some of the board believe that an official policy is needed because even though the company regularly recruits underrepresented minorities, the company tends to lose them quickly. This means that there are few women or minorities in leadership positions.

Use the research provided to explain how other companies address similar concerns. Investigate the diversity and inclusion policies of several other companies. (A list with links to several companies has been provided.) Note specific programs these companies have in place to recruit, retain, and publicize their efforts to increase diversity, and include these as examples in your brief. If you quote from one of the resources or refer to specific facts, numbers, or statistics, you must include a footnote citation. (For instructions, see the APA handout for this assignment.)

Resources

With the exception of the two chapters in your Freshman Business Connections textbook, links to all the research you need to complete this assignment can be found on the FBC Workshop web page at the Business Communication Center website:

FBC Workshop Page: <https://walton.uark.edu/business-communication-center/Resources/>

Required Reading Assignments:

Chapter 4, *Freshman Business Connections*, “Thinking Critically and Creatively”

Chapter 5, *Freshman Business Connections*, “Living in a World of Diversity”

[“Fostering Innovation Through a Diverse Workforce,” *Forbes Insights*](#)

[“Why Diversity Can Be Bad for Business \(And Inclusion Is the Answer\),” by Sebastian Bailey, *Forbes*](#)

[“Millennials Have a Different Definition of Diversity and Inclusion,” by Lydia Dishman, *Fast Company*](#)

[“When to Cite” Guide](#)

[List of online diversity and inclusion policies for other large, international companies](#)

Optional Additional Resources

“FBC Overview,” PowerPoint Slideshow. This is the same slideshow used in the live workshops given the week of Sept. 14 – 18. You can download the slideshow on the [FBC Workshop page of the Business Communication Center website.](#)

Why building diversity is important:

[“How Diversity Can Drive Innovation,” by Hewlett, Marshall, and Sherbin, *Harvard Business Review*](#)

[“Why You Should Do More Than Just Talk About Workplace Diversity,” by Medina and Gomez, *Fast Company*.](#)

How to build and maintain diversity:

[“How to Increase Workplace Diversity” *Wall Street Journal*](#)

[“Uncovering Talent: A New Model for Inclusion and Diversity” by Roberta Matuson, *Fast Company*](#)

[“Embracing Cultural Diversity in a Small Business Environment,” by Deborah Swallow, *business2community.com*.](#)

[“Diversity Is Useless Without Inclusivity,” by Christine M. Riordan, *Harvard Business Review*](#)