**Assessment 2: Individual Report - Research Proposal Proportion of total marks: 10%**

**Due:** Week 4, Friday, 4 pm

**Length:** 750 words (± 20%)

## Description:

In the first group discussion meeting, all members must prepare an overall situation analysis of the selected brand and the challenges it is facing. It is expected that the group will come to an agreement on one issue as the biggest challenge the brand is facing in the future. Therefore, the outcome of this meeting must be to develop a ‘problem statement’ about that brand.

For example, if you pick Woolworths as the target brand, you can propose a problem statement like this: “how Woolworths will be able to compete against the rising competitors such as Aldi and Coles both enjoying strong competitive advantages (e.g. price-cutting approaches)?”

**Table 1. Brand list**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Santos Ltd** | Nestlé | ANZ |
| Optus | Qantas | Coles |
| Vodafone | Woolworths | Commonwealth Bank |
| Bunnings | Virgin Australia | Telstra |
| **Target** | BHP Billiton | **Peregrine (OTR)** |
| National Australia Bank | Origin | Nestlé |

Each group has 3 or 4 members. Using the instructions and example questions to answer given in the lecture seminars, each member is required to consider the ‘problem statement’ and prepare a basic research proposal with regards to the selected brand and to develop research questions.

Please note: **each member is required to submit a separate research proposal**. These proposals will be later put together in order to form the initial part of the final group report (the market research report).

## Writing the proposal

The proposal should be written in an essay format and therefore should include:

* + A clear, succinct and straightforward **introduction** that (1) outlines the purpose of the report, or state the research that was pursued, (2) declares the principal findings of the report and (3) roughly signposts the structure of the report—what will appear in it and in what order.
  + **Report body** that outlines the research proposal elements, with regard to the selected brand.
  + A concise **conclusion** paragraph, that "wraps up" your report, validates to the reader that you accomplished what you set out to do, includes managerial implications (i.e., how the discussion could be useful to a manager), and provides the reader with a sense of closure on the topic.
  + A **reference list** of all the sources and material used in the report (using Harvard Referencing style).

The following headings and further instructions will help you structure your essay in an academic format that offers a good flow of thoughts to the reader.

## Introduction

For executive summary, you need to provide a concise note on why executives (of the selected brand) should care about this research, what it provides to them and how they may benefit from this research. As for the introduction, you need to give an overview of the proposal, the purpose, the main research problem and the sections to expect.

## Research focus and objectives

By way of introduction, this section should take the form of an abstract of the general subject or study area and identify the discipline(s) within which it falls. From this analysis, the problem statement you wish to research will emerge and constitutes the reason or condition, which necessitates the research. From the problem statement then you identify the concepts and/or variables that can represent the target problem. This part must be supported by journal article references of the concepts and variables you plan to incorporate. From the critical analysis above, you need to write down the main objectives of the research.

## Research methodology and design

Outline the methodology to be used, and explain why (qualitative, quantitative; exploratory, descriptive or causal). You need to address the following: target population, sample size and sampling method, scales and their measurement, data collection, data analysis, reporting and projected outcomes.

## Conclusion

1. **References**

Provide up to five references for journal articles or website articles with respect to the selected brand, the industry and/or the problem

It is expected that you will:

* + Submit your essay in a timely fashion according to the assigned due date.
  + Avoid using too descriptive statements. Instead, using your own words, express analytical deliberations in order to explore the ‘problem statement’.
  + Use academic journal articles and books to support your arguments.
  + Connect the provided arguments with marketing concepts and theories learned in the previous weeks.

The expected length of this essay is approximately 750 words (± 20%) words (excluding the reference list). Essays which are significantly longer or shorter than this will be marked accordingly. The marker is not expected to read substantially beyond the expected word length.

The essay is designed to assess your ability to:

* + Conduct independent research on material relevant to the assignment topic
  + Develop an argument in your essay and justify your answer with examples
  + Define and explain key terms if necessary
  + Plan a systematic and critical analysis of relevant academic publications and other research
  + Present a logical, clearly expressed and accurately referenced written essay.
  + To be able to illustrate critically thinking through a critique.

This is a research essay and your research may include reference to textbooks, journals, newspapers or other articles. Your opinions and comments are welcome as long as you can justify them with examples and evidence.

## Learning Outcomes*:*

Topic learning outcomes relevant to this assessment are as follows:

* + Understanding various elements of a research proposal
  + Clearly demonstrating how to identify a real-world problem and convert that into a research problem
  + Illustrating the ability to justify and develop a clear-cut problem statement
  + Applying techniques of developing research problems to actual brands and generating relevant research questions

## Writing Guidelines and Submission

* + Please ensure that your name and Student ID are on the assignment
  + At least five references should be included in your report, and no more than two of these may be website references, that is, references to information written directly on web pages (Note: electronic journals, reports accessed electronically in pdf format, etc. are not considered to be website references).
  + You must acknowledge all reference sources using the Harvard referencing style (i.e. Author/Date). Please refer to University’s guideline document for

Harvard Referencing, available from Student Learning Centre ([Harvard](http://www.flinders.edu.au/slc_files/Documents/Blue%20Guides/Harvard%20Referencing.pdf) [Referencing](http://www.flinders.edu.au/slc_files/Documents/Blue%20Guides/Harvard%20Referencing.pdf)). You must also provide a reference list. If the Harvard style of referencing is not used and/or no reference list is included, marks will be deducted. If NO in-text referencing is used at all, the assignment will score a FAIL - less than 50%.

* + Grammar and spelling are important in terms of impact - essays that are

careless in spelling, grammar and presentation will be penalised.

* + Your essay should be Double Spaced, use 12 Pitch, Arial Font, 2cm Margins. Please submit your assignment via the Assignment drop box provided in Week 4 on the FLO site. The document should be in Microsoft Word or PDF format.
  + Penalties may be applied for exceeding the maximum word limit (750 words, ± 20%) by 10%.

## Allocation of Marks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Item | Grade Share |
| 1- Executive summary and Introduction | 25% |
| 3- Research focus and objectives | 20% |
| 4- Research methodology and design | 25% |
| 5- Conclusion | 20% |
| 6- Referencing | 10% |
| **Total** | **100%** |