

## J202

Culver

Tip Sheet: Strategy Memos

Week 4

When you are writing a memo to propose a strategy, you should be less concerned with the “memo format” and more with how well you’ve defined your approach and answered arguments to the contrary. For instance, do not concern yourself with the “To:” or “From:” structure of the header but spend a great deal of time honing a clear lead.

Here are some questions you should ask yourself before beginning:

- who is the audience for your memo and what do they want to know from you?
- what is the target audience for your advertising or public relations?
- what is the current belief or mindset of that target audience? (what do they know and think in relation to your situation?)
- what specific objective do you want to achieve with this specific piece of advertising or public relations?

Once you’ve answered those questions, craft your marketing strategy. That strategy will include:

- whether to run advertising
- whether to engage in specific new public relations efforts
- the creative concept (theme) of your communications (e.g., TV spots, print ads, collateral material)
- the costs of your strategy

Now that you have a strategy, write a memo selling that strategy to your client or boss. The memo will most likely include:

- a lead that clearly and concisely describes your proposed strategy
- a brief summary of the situation or problem you’re responding to
- reasons your proposed strategy will be effective
- recognition of potential problems with your strategy and reasons your proposal is sound despite those arguments (e.g., “The proposed TV campaign is more expensive than print advertising, but television is the best medium to reach our target audience so we will get better value for each dollar spent.”)
- if the strategy proposes new communications, such as ads or press releases, details on the creative concept and execution of those communications
- a conclusion reiterating the strategy and its effectiveness

Watch out for these potential problems with your memo:

- leading with discussion of the problem, rather than your strategy
- proposing a strategy with no recognition of the costs
- appearing overly defensive about a problem or situation
- using passive voice
- describing the creative concept with little precision
- writing too much about why other strategies would not work instead of why yours will work
- adopting a tone for the memo that does not fit the audience for that memo