

Introduction to Participants

Business Writing and Presentation has been designed as your guide to using teamwork and technology to produce business documents.

Upon completion of this course you will have produced memos, letters, technical specifications, proposals and business presentations using a teamwork writing process and Microsoft Word 2002 and PowerPoint 2002.

The course has four components with which you will become familiar:

1. The Participant’s Manual (this document)
2. Business Writing and Presentation Exercise Files (which contain on-line versions of course documents)
3. The Millennium Style Manual, which is a guide to the productions and specifications for document production, together with references and resources in print or on the Internet
4. Microsoft Interactive Training and Help

This course proposes that there is no “correct” answer to business writing and presentation problems, rather there are answers that are effective or ineffective depending on the message and the receiver, the presentation and the context. A “good” piece of business writing is one that achieves the desired reaction from the reader.

This course proposes that teamwork is the best way to develop documents since it allows the division of labor and the viewing of the product by many pairs of eyes. The chances of remaining a successful team are improved when members are aware of the processes that encourage productive interaction.

The course has two objectives:

1. to promote a process – to encourage the use of team problem-solving for best results in the production of business communication documents
2. to provide useful content – to present a resource book for applying good writing strategies and effective use of technology to produce clear and effective business communication.

It does so as a result of the firm belief that the problem-solving approach and appropriate resources will be a major asset to the career and lifelong learning skills of the Information Technology Professional.

Course Structure

This course assumes that you are organized into teams with four to six members and that there are four to six teams in the class. To complete the course each team will need to be able to discuss problems and will probably want to use a flip chart or whiteboard to plan and to make notes.

The course itself is organized into 10 modules, each of which presents a problem to the team. Each module starts with a description of the problem and a statement of the required outcome. Following that, the learning activities – the things you are to do to achieve the outcome – are described and a suggested approach is outlined that will help your team achieve the outcome. While specific techniques and processes are suggested, the important thing is to achieve the outcome, rather than follow the steps.

All learning activities are based on a seven-step problem-solving model which has proved successful in a wide variety of settings. The model is suggested because it ensures that all members of the team have input into team decisions and that responsibility for tasks is distributed among all team members. Your team or your instructor, however, may well have other processes that ensure appropriate discussion and division of labour within your group and if so, you should use those.

The Scenario

You will quickly recognize that the modules in this course are based on a scenario. A scenario is used to help your learning by placing this course in Business Writing and Presentation into a context – it should be easier for you to identify and analyze tasks, develop reports and presentations because of the context that is provided by the scenario.

The scenario begins with a memo your team receives from the chair of Millennium Corporation in which he expresses some concerns and seems to want you to do something. In the first part of the course you will figure out what this confused memorandum asks you to do, get confirmation from the chair that what your team proposes to do is correct and then you will develop a request for proposal. In the second part of the course you will exchange your request for proposal with another team and your role will change. Now you will play the role of a contractor who is developing a proposal and presentation to respond to the request written by that other team.

Teamwork, Time Pressure and Reality

This course happens in a compressed time frame – less than three days. You will experience time pressure and will rapidly discover that the only way you can accomplish all the tasks is to divide them among the members of your team and to make use of all the resources available to you. As you start the course you will want to discover who has had experience writing proposals or making presentations, who knows how to format documents in Word and who has used PowerPoint. If your team needs to learn something new, members will need to find out what the Millennium Style Manual says, what Microsoft Help can tell you, or what additional assistance your course instructor can give you to accomplish your tasks.

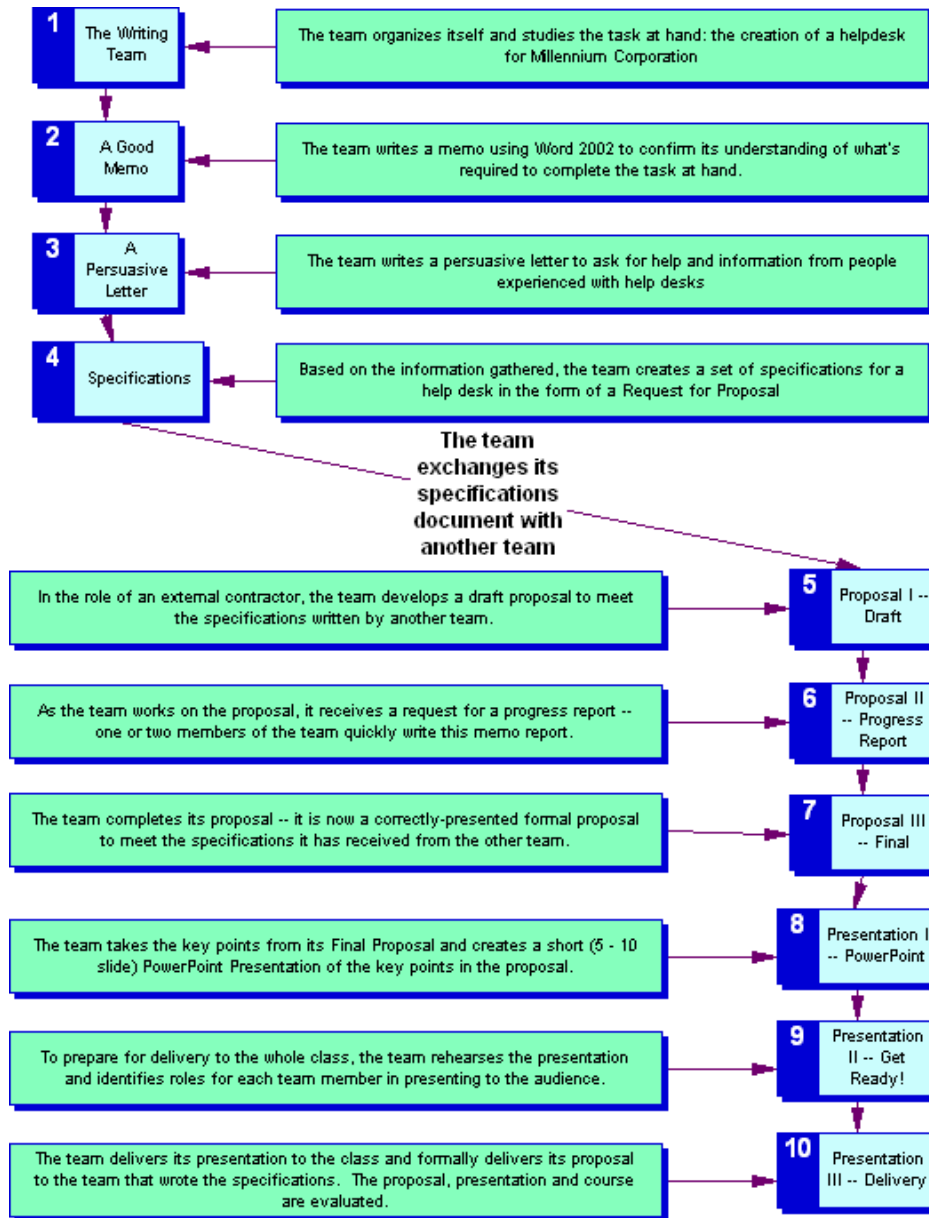
At the end you will have had a practical introduction to teamwork and business writing and presentation which you will apply again and again through your Information Technology Program and your career. You will also be aware that you have only begun to learn how to be an effective writer and presenter and that there are many, many things about Word and PowerPoint that you will have to learn.

In this writer’s experience of over 30 years writing in business and organizations, this is reality. Teams come together, divide up the work and learn what they must in order to satisfy often unreasonable demands from management. Normally the team needs to help management clarify what is being asked and there is never enough time.

But somehow the team does pull it off and has the satisfaction of knowing that through teamwork and skill the task could be done.

That’s what will happen with your team in this course.

Course Map



Course Structure

Course Modules and Suggested Timing

Module Number	Module Name	Hours
1	The Writing Team	2
2	A “Good” Memo	2
3	A Persuasive Letter	1.5
4	Specifications	3
5	Proposal I - Draft	1.5 – 2.5
6	Proposal II – Progress Report	1
7	Proposal III – Final	2.5
8	Presentation I – PowerPoint	2.5
9	Presentation II – Get Ready!	2
10	Presentation III – Delivery	2