

Industry Study Team Assignment

Much of what we are studying in this course equips you to do an in-depth study of the industry in which your Project Connect firm competes. Your assignment is to research your industry so that you become something of an expert. Sources that you might use for your research include library and internet resources, as well as discussions with persons knowledgeable about the industry.

Your research should follow the outline of an industry study discussed in Chapter 10 of *Economics of Strategy* by Besanko, Dranove, Shanley, and Schaefer. In other words, you should do a five-forces analysis of your industry. The types of questions you should consider in analyzing your industry are outlined in Appendix 10.1 of the book. Also take a look at the Motley Fool's discussion of the five forces of competition. Click on several of the columns included here: <http://www.fool.com/search/solr.aspx?exchange-input=&q=porter%27s+five+forces&source=ignsittn0000001>

You should convey your research findings in a business-style report. You should write a ten to twelve page report (12 pt. font, double-spaced, one-inch margins) that could be submitted to the top executives of the company or to a group of outside investors contemplating buying stock in the company. Make sure that you appropriately cite all of the outside references that you use, because your audience will not want to make important decisions based on unreliable sources or flimsy evidence and research. Be careful and efficient in your writing. Two of my favorite essays on business writing are "It Is Recommended That You Write Clearly," by Gary Blake, *WSJ*, 4/3/95:

<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uky.edu/docview/398553202/48E61259468E4A5BPQ/42?accountid=11836> and "How to Write Good," by Michael O'Donoghue, originally published in *The National Lampoon*, http://workableweb.com/pages/tips_how_to_write_good.htm. A concise list of do's and don'ts is contained at <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/examples/humor/writegood.cfm>.

Attach as an appendix to your report a copy of each of the sources that you use! If you cite a book or long article, only include the title page and the pages you refer to in your report. For short articles from periodicals, newspapers, and internet sources, include the entire piece. Then in your memo you can use very brief citations to your sources, e.g. see Appendix A-1. The cover page to the appendix can serve as your reference list. BTW, I have found that the quality of the appendix correlates very closely with the quality of the body of the report, and I conjecture that the relationship is causal.

The written report is due Thursday, July 23. Your group will also make an oral presentation of your analysis sometime in the fall semester. I will grade your written report and return it to you with detailed comments. The oral presentation will be an ungraded assignment, but Harvie and Karl will be evaluating your oral communication skills and giving feedback as well. I have attached to the course website (see <http://gatonweb.uky.edu/faculty/scott/mba603-605fall2009/>) several industry studies conducted by individual students in the TEI Piraeus-UK MBA program a few years back that I think are pretty good. My hope is that a team of four or five students who have four weeks to work on a report can do even better.