

Writing 2E Company Study: Assignment #A (team)

Company History

Objective

The technological products that we use everyday were designed and made by ordinary people. But for every product there is an extraordinary story about trial and error, marketing trials, inventive genius, personal heartbreak, delays, surprises, supplier problems, rising and falling prices, joy, hope and fear. Welcome to the real world of engineering!

For the first part of our study, we will learn all we can about the companies that made our products; we will also learn about their competitors. We will use both the library and the internet to obtain information for a background report. In an upcoming team assignment (Assignment #B) we will also learn about the evolution of our products and how they arrived at their present-day form.

Your writing style should be brief and to the point. Be sure to organize your report with headings and subheadings.

Tasks

Write a 5–8 page (double-spaced) summary report with two separate sections, including: 1) a history of the company that made your device (Section I); and, 2) the history of your company's competitors (Section II). Your team will work together to write and edit Section I. In Section II each team member will individually contribute separate paragraphs.

- For Section I, locate your company's headquarters and the division (if any) that made your device. Obtain the company's street address, city, state, country, phone number and e-mail URL. If your company is a larger conglomerate, also locate the division or subsidiary that made your device. Try to locate the office handling inquiries about your device. (You will write a formal business letter to them in one of your first individual assignments.)
- Section I should comprise a brief background history of your company. How did they start? Who founded them and where? What were their first products? Do they manufacture other products? How much of their market do they control?
- What is the origin of your device? When did the manufacturer first make your device? Did they invent the device from scratch or improve upon previously existing models?

- Note that your device has markings. Some of these may be decypherable, such as a model number, name, and possibly a serial number (e.g., automotive tire jack, Mod. No. XYZ, Ser. No. 12345). Other markings may not be so understandable. Note the markings in your paper and retain them for your upcoming research and correspondence.
- Has your company announced plans for any future improvements on your device? Have they recently showcased a new model? How is your older model different from newer models?
- For Section II, each member of your team will individually contribute separate paragraphs outlining histories of your company's competitors. (For example, if there are four people in your team, Section II will include four separate sub-sections on four separate competitor histories.) The information does not need to be as detailed or lengthy as that in Section I, but it should cover the most important details. Be sure to identify your portion of Section II with your name.
- Be certain to cite all sources of your information in both sections. DO NOT SIMPLY COPY AND PASTE TEXT FROM WEBSITES! Summarize what you learn about your company in your own words (paraphrase). If you copy any passage(s) verbatim, be certain to use quotes and cite the source(s). Include a short "References" section at the end of your paper, citing all sources.

- In Section I of your paper (device history), insert at least one (1) photo or figure of your device. Be certain to assign a figure number to each figure/photo, and include a caption and source. (The source should also appear in your “References” section.) For example:



Figure 1. Power Jack. (Source: Dorsett 2003)

Photos and figures may also be added to Section II.

Due Date

This is a team assignment; the results will become a part of your group's redesign effort. See the team schedule website for due date.