

Writing 2E Product Study: Assignment #B (team) Product Evolution

Objective

In Assignment #A, you studied the history of the manufacturer that made your product and competitors' products; in Assignment #B, you will examine the history and evolution of the product itself. Each product has a unique evolution, from its earliest inception to its present-day embodiment. Usually, the product's evolution reflects changes to market demands, related devices and technologies. For example, the very first automotive wheels used wooden spokes, reflecting the horse-drawn wagon technology that automobiles replaced. As roads improved and automobile speeds increased, wooden spokes gave way to steel spokes, then metallic rims.

For this assignment you will again use headings and subheadings to organize the content of your text. The organization of your document should reflect not only how the device has evolved, but how you expect your reader to interpret the information you provide. Include figures and diagrams along with text to show your reader crucial evolutionary changes. As always, cite all sourced material.

Because this is a team assignment, your team will need to organize sections and tasks for each team member. Try to distribute tasks equally, but also work with each team member's strengths to yield the best document possible.

Tasks

Write a 10–12 page (double-spaced) summary report on the history and evolution of your device.

- Starting with the first, earliest embodiment(s) of your device, describe the four or five most important changes that led to its present-day form (one for each team member). Include a figure or photo to illustrate what the device looked like at each stage of its evolution. *Each figure must include a figure number, caption and source; cite all figure numbers from the body of your text.*
- Identify four or five key patents in the evolution of the device (one patent per team member), including a few text excerpts and illustrations from the patents. Explain why *these* patents were the ones you selected as important. NOTE: You may search for patents online by going to the US Patent and Trademark Office website at www.uspto.gov. *Be sure to cite patents by their patent numbers and titles.*

- Identify what you believe were the most important market forces and customer needs that led to each of the device's evolutionary steps. What role did market competition play in the device's evolution?
- Identify any general trends in your device's evolution. For example, have most of the changes come from using new and different *materials*? Has the *design* of the device changed radically, or has the design largely remained the same over the years? Has the device changed mostly because of the way(s) it works with other devices? Has the *cost* of making the device changed?
- Given the evolution of the device thus far, how do you believe the device will look in ten years? Which factors described above will have the greatest influences in pushing the device's evolution further?
- As always, be certain to cite all sources of your information. DO NOT SIMPLY COPY AND PASTE TEXT FROM WEBSITES AND BOOKS! Summarize what you learn about your device 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 to *cite all sources*.

Due Dates

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