

From: Morales, Lawrence

To: MAT116 Students

Date: October 3, 2005

Re: The Structure of Focus Memos

In addition to the guide posted on the H: Drive regarding the Focus Memos, this document serves to try to carefully lay out the structure of each memo. Unless I specify otherwise, assume that EACH memo should have the following structure.

First Paragraph: The first paragraph should have EACH of the following: (A) An introduction (1–3 sentences) stating what the goal of the current memo is, AND (B) A short summary of what you have done or found in previous analyses and reported in previous memos. (Again, 1–3 sentences max) This is a summary, not a complete accounting. In the first paragraph, you want to give the reader a brief sense of WHERE YOU ARE GOING with the memo and WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN before getting here.

Middle Paragraphs: The middle paragraphs should be a description (not a short summary...that's in the last paragraph) of what analysis you undertook for the current memo, what tools you used to do the analysis, and what results you obtained. When there are somewhat calculations to show, you may want to place them in the Summary/Footnote region at the bottom/end of the memo to make the memo easier to read. Just make sure to refer the reader to the bottom/end so they know it's there. You should pretend you are writing to a manager or boss who is relatively unfamiliar with what you are doing at the mathematical level – you'll need to provide enough detail to convince him/her that you know what you are doing with the math but not enough that you totally overwhelm him/her with detail. This is a hard thing to learn to do well, so don't be discouraged if you don't quite get it right at the beginning. Any mathematical notation must be formatted with the Equation Editor...no handwriting of math notation, calculations, or equations is allowed. This is supposed to be a *professional* memo to your boss/manager...it should look great and be free of excessive spelling and grammar errors.

Last Paragraph: The last paragraph should have EACH of the following: (A) A brief summary of what you found in the analysis related to the current memo. You'll essentially be summarizing *very quickly* what you said in the Middle Paragraphs, ALSO (B) A short statement of how your analysis affects your decision on the project, if at all (foreclose or workout, for example), AND (C) A sentence or two that describes what information you think you may need to make a more accurate decision. In the last paragraph, you want to give the reader a brief sense of WHAT YOU FOUND, HOW IT IMPACTS YOUR PROJECT DECISION, and WHERE YOU THINK YOU'RE HEADED NEXT.

Summary/Footnote of Results

This section of the memo has only the final results of those parts of the problem where a number or simple explanation is required as the final answer. Those parts that ask for explanation or discussion can be included in the main section above. This is also a good section for included complicated calculations that will only clutter up the main text above.

- a.) "Your Result Here and explained above" means you should report your numerical answer to a question in this section so that when the instructor looks at all the memos from your team, he/she can verify that you all have the same data and that it is correct.

***You may have to be creative when reporting your work and results. Sometimes, tables are a good way to do this. If you need help with creating tables, ask me and I'll help out.