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Research Reflection Paper

At the beginning of this project, I was under the impression that I more or less had a path for my research project. Since I had exposure to the field of marketing, I thought I would simply explore interview marketers about their field, and I would be able to provide insights into the marketing writing education at UC Berkeley. I thought it would interesting to explore this field I hoped to pursue professionally, and I could develop greater connections with people in my field. Therefore, I painstakingly constructed my proposal based on the guidelines, and I admittedly and naively thought that I was ready to embark on this research project. With this in mind, I submitted my research proposal, and then, my "perfect" plan started to implode. Upon receiving my proposal, there were a couple of issues that were immediately pointed out to me regarding my project. My topic was too broad and interviewing individuals is not a reliable way to ensure that research is finished. With this feedback, I learned a valuable lesson when it comes to research: you can never be too narrow with your topic. Facing obstacles in my proposal, my first inclination was to rework my plan. I reached out to professionals and using the web, I compiled a list of potential documents that I could analyze further through a research project. While this idea eventually fell through, I was able to gain some practical skills in communicating with professionals: learning to send emails and the right time of the day to ensure response and remember to promptly thank an individual for time. I definitely brushed up on some email etiquette skills through this phase of my projects. Ready to start exploring a specific document in marketing, I quickly learned that most of the documentation I wanted to analyze was private and internal. Therefore, I could not access these documents, which rendered by new idea impossible. Consequently, this led me to the next phase of the research process: throwing away your ideas and starting from scratch.

Normally, I would be scared too completely let go of an idea that I had grown attached to, but I learned that through this project, for the sake of progress, sacrifices must be made. With assistance, I was able to discover a new angle for my project that allowed me to touch on a marketing/communication through the lens of press releases. Considering this topic had not even crossed my mind, I really started to firsthand experience the benefits of being willing to be flexible in the process of conducting research. As I dove into my topic, this is where I started to encounter the mechanisms behind the research. For me, establishing the methodology was easily the hardest part of my research. When creating a methodology, so many elements must be considered and explained to provide sufficient justification for why you are doing what you are doing. Moreover, in this process time, management was also a key factor. Considering, we had little under a month to do this project part of the process was creating a strict timetable for me to follow to ensure that I had a project to submit. Juggling exploration of research and doing the actual research was a bit of a challenge; however, I did learn there is value in being thorough in planning and creating a solid methodology. By establishing carefully how I was going about this project, this made the actual process of research a bit more streamlined and less scary to tackle. On the flip side, I also learned that being able to ditch "analysis paralysis" at a certain point and start doing *something* is also a befit mindset when doing research. There is no such thing as the perfect anything in research; therefore, being able to take a deep dive into the research is an important aspect to see how your plan is functioning and then being able to make appropriate revisions.

Upon finishing my research, I still had to be able to contextualize this information for a reader. Surprisingly, participating in the research festival was actually really beneficial to the process. When presenting this information to an audience unknowledgeable about my topic, this really gave me a different perspective as to how someone understood my research. With this feedback, I could go to my writeup and have a better idea of where changes needed to be made and how I could improve my path of logic in my research write-up. Overall, I felt that this entire project has made the concept of research less daunting. Moreover, I feel more equipped to do research for the rest of my college career.