***Discussion Question Responses***

Each weekly discussion topic has a requirement for a response that is written as a specific type of work product. Some forms of work products may be familiar and others may be new to you. The information below provides guidance for how to scope and compose your responses for each type of product. If you have questions about how to complete the required work product, please post them in the *Ask the Professor* forum.

Note: Your course may not use all work product formats listed below.

***Briefing Statements***

Briefing statements are a way to keep leadership/management/decision-makers informed of current issues influencing the organization. A successful briefing statement should be clear, concise, and easy to read. While there is not a standard format/template for a briefing statement, all statements include at a minimum the purpose of the statement, a summary of the facts needed to address the question(s), and a conclusion. Your conclusion could include a recommendation(s) if required.

Briefing statements are short (your discussion instructions give you the requirement paragraph parameters). Briefing statements are concise, but short does not always equal concise. Concise means every word is necessary. Briefing statements should be clear, but clear is not the same as concise. Clear should focus you on the reader/audience (your discussion instructions tell you the audience) and the briefing statement should only include what the reader/audience needs to know about the topic. Finally, your briefing statement should be reliable, meaning you have authoritative sources to support your facts/declarative statements (your discussion instructions include source requirements).

While your briefing statements are short, you should still consider the following (think of below as a checklist):

1. Why are you writing the briefing statement (i.e., what is the statement’s purpose)
2. Who will read your briefing statement (i.e., who is your audience)
3. What are the facts the reader/audience needs to know most
4. What points must you address in your statement (see assignment details).

Once your briefing statement is complete, consider the following: is the purpose clear, is the language appropriate for the audience, do you have content that is not essential to the audience or the purpose, and do you address all the elements in the grading rubric?

***Newsletter Article or Item***

As you work on this type of discussion item, think about the newsletters you receive in your workplace. Are they engaging? Do they capture and keep your attention? Are they interesting?

There is no format/template for a newsletter, so you should be creative. Consider the following as you draft your newsletter article or item:

1. Who is your audience (the discussion question instructions tell you the audience)?
2. Is your item newsworthy?
3. Does your headline immediately capture the reader’s attention?
4. Does your lead-in sentence/paragraph keep the reader’s attention?
5. Does your closing tell the reader “what to do next?

***Talking Points Paper***

Talking points should help decision-makers/leaders/managers make decisions. Decision-makers use talking points instead of (or in addition to) reading lengthy reports because the talking points only include the pertinent facts and/or the bottom line.

There is no required format for a talking point paper, but if you Google *“what does a talking point paper look like”* you will see several useful examples.

**Note:** this assignment asks for paragraphs (including full sentences), not short phrases. Thus, each talking point should have at least one full sentence. You may use Bullets or Number to identify each distinct talking point.

***Briefing Paper***

A briefing paper is a work product that is used to inform an organization’s leadership about the facts of a matter under discussion or for which they must make a decision. The briefing statement should use documented (cited) facts to answer one or more question(s) from these leaders.

Since you are not yet “experts” in the field, you must find and use factual information from published (authoritative) sources and/or recognized experts (i.e., authorities in the field).

There is no required format for a briefing statement, but you should include an introduction, body, and conclusion. Use the grading rubric as well to ensure your briefing statement includes all required elements.

***Expert Opinion***

Expert opinions are solicited by decision makers to inform them and to help them make better decisions (see the audience requirement for the discussion topic). This work product is very similar to a briefing statement and should be based upon information from authoritative sources.

This type of work product is used in advanced CSIA courses to allow you to *practice* providing an *expert opinion* using your own voice. You should still use appropriate quotations and/or citations to support your stated opinion (e.g. Smith and Johnson, in a 2015 report, held that …).

There is no required format for an expert opinion paper, but you should include an introduction, body, and conclusion. Use the grading rubric as well to ensure your expert opinion paper includes all required elements.

***Citations and References***

Any time you have a quotation, you must have a citation that provides information about the source. For citations and references in discussion responses, APA formatting is highly recommended since this style works well with the LEO editor.

Put your reference list at the end of your posting. Left justify the entries (don't try to do the "hanging indent" ... LEO's editor doesn't have this style as a built-in).