

- Chronicle your activities preparing the research paper. Include information regarding formulating your research plan, topic selection, how sources were found and reviewed, how you determined whether or not a source was accurate and/or valuable to the Research Paper, how you familiarized yourself with the APA format, how you strengthened your grammar abilities (spelling, punctuation, etc.) and familiarized yourself with the “rules” of formal/academic writing.

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Discuss where your strengths and weaknesses lie in the research process; how you are capitalizing on your strengths and overcoming your weaknesses.

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What are the next steps in the research process for you.

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Provide three tips or suggestions you have for your classmates to assist them in successfully completing their research paper.

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***Make sure your answers are detailed enough to be informative and beneficial to the class.***

My first step in writing this research paper was deciding on a topic that I personally enjoy. Being a big fan of science education, I decided to run with the Discovery Channel as I am also a fan of their media content. Most of my sources were chosen for their reputable nature. Although the Washington Post, Forbes Magazine, CNET, and other sources occasionally get their facts incorrect, they are held to a much higher standard than somebody ranting their personal opinions on their blog. At the same time, blog rants provide useful leads to research avenues previously overlooked.

At first my research trended toward topics I thought more business-appropriate, such as CEO choices and revenues, but could not go very far in these directions as they are not yet my strong suit—thus my need to take business classes. So instead I chose to investigate aspect of their business that I was more well-versed in, such as technology and the Internet as a medium. From that point, my research flowed much more smoothly and I was able to build on my foundation of knowledge in this field. Writing about what I know about strengthened my work.

For some reason, I found it frustrating at first to adapt to the APA formatting for references, and I don't know if this was due to being more used to MLA style or that my references were in such a mess organizationally in my notes causing the problem. This was quickly overcome and I successfully got into a groove of organizing my references. As my supervisor says, "Frustration is usually an indicator that you are about to learn something."

Now I need to step away from my research for a week, take a deep breath, and let these ideas organize themselves in my head a little more. I was almost done with my outline when I realized who my company's real competitors are, and it will require me to take portions of my paper into new directions in order to accommodate this new data. I need more research on what my company's competitors are doing.

The lessons I'd like to pass onto my classmates:

1. Write about what interests you. Pick a company that you have a personal interest in or provides a service that engages you.
2. Write about what you know about. Don't get bogged down on a topic that you know absolutely nothing about. If you have to read volumes of information just to get up to speed on a topic, it's better to find something more accessible.
3. Don't focus exclusively on business resources. If your company is doing something interesting with a new technology or strategy, go investigate experts outside of the business world on that new technology or strategy and form your own opinion on it.

The immense size and diversification I've encountered with Discovery Holding's Corporation has definitely bogged down and scattered my research. There are so many faces to the company from cable channels, web sites, retail stores, and educational services that I quickly realized it would be impossible for me to tackle them all in a single six-page paper.

Then I realized this was actually an advantage in writing this analysis. I don't know much about retailing, but thanks to Discovery having so many technology-focused business ventures I could focus my analysis on those and leave the retailing aside. I would suggest that the company being large can be used to your advantage by providing you with a wide variety of subjects to research within its operations.