**Why is it Worth it? Making Your Point When it Matters**

Regardless of your eventual career path, chances are that at some point, you may need to explain results of a project and defend why the project is worth continuing. Some examples of this could be:

* Explaining the results of the Phase I clinical trial for a new wonder drug and why it is worth moving to Phase II
* Explaining what research results have been accomplished in the first year of your five-year, multi-million dollar grant and why the project is worth continuing to fund
* Explaining the progress on a defense (or really any) contract and why you will not be able to meet the initial agreed upon deadline, but it is still worth continuing the contract

**Who is my target audience?**

While it may be easy enough to explain these items to people in the same field, or with the same level of experience as you, unfortunately this is often not the case. Many times, briefs are given and/or written for non-academics: policymakers, analysts, practitioners, CEOs, or other decision-making positions. These are professionals, you are not presenting results to the general population; they are just not experts in your field. Additionally, they tend to be busy. ☹

Your goal becomes explaining what you have accomplished and why it is worth continuing, and doing it in a very short period of time.

**When is a researching briefing appropriate?**

Policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders are interested in research as it progresses. As many projects are performed on a multi-year timescale, regular updates are necessary to ensure everyone involved in on the same page and on the right track. You can provide a briefing at any stage and many projects will have numerous briefing throughout the duration.

**What format should be final briefing be in?**

Your choice! (kind of) You have the option of providing your brief as a pdf that you could send to your project stakeholders via email or provide your brief as a recorded presentation using PowerPoint slides (just slides and voice) that you would give in a face-to-face meeting. A template for both options will be provided via Canvas.

**How should I structure my research briefing?**

Regardless of which format you choose, your brief must contain five main parts

* Title
  + Keep it short
  + Make catchy- consider using an usual phrase or a question
  + Be sure it is relevant to the topic
* Summary
  + What are the main points you want your audience to understand if they do not have time to read the entire document?
* Key points and findings
  + Unlike your conventional lab report, a research briefing puts the main conclusions up front and easy to find!
* Introduction
  + Grab the reader’s attention, introduce the topic, and explain the importance
  + Introduce the topic, explain the importance, give basic background and context, outline why your research is relevant
* Body (main text)
  + Ask yourself: What problem does the research address? What conclusions were you trying to find? What did you find? What will be of interest to your audience? What do you want them to do as a result of reading your briefing?
  + Remember, this is not about shrinking down a full report or article; it is about deciding what items are most important. After each paragraph, ask yourself “so what?”
  + Guide the reader: Use subheadings, short paragraphs, graphs or illustrations
  + Use clear, easy to understand language. Avoid extremely technical or discipline-specific jargon.

You may also include any tables, figures, or schemes as necessary to support your findings.