

Writing a Business Report

What is the Purpose of a Business Report?

A business report is an evaluation of a particular issue, set of circumstances, or financial operations that relate to the performance of a business. Its main purpose is to communicate relevant information succinctly and efficiently. It is often written in response to an executive of the company, and often takes the form of a memo with the report attached.

Scenario Examples

Example 1:

A company manager who is concerned about undue wastage in the packaging department might request the OIC of the Packaging Department to look into the issue and to submit a report that highlights the problems and recommends solutions. While most business reports focus on existing issues, they can also be predictive in nature.

Example 2:

A manager might commission a report that evaluates the current use of computer technology in a company, and which recommends how the company might best position itself so that it can benefit from any future developments in computer technology.

The Format of a Business Report

A business report is written in an abbreviated style that allows the reader to navigate the report quickly, and identify key elements. It makes use of headings, sub-headings, bullet points, diagrams and tables, to communicate the relevant information. Business reports can range from brief one-or-two page reports, to reports of a hundred pages or more. However, any business report that you are asked to write for assignment purposes will probably run around four or five pages. It will usually include the following five elements:

- Table of Contents
- Executive Summary
- Body
- Findings/Recommendations
- Conclusion

Table of Contents

The table of contents should be arranged according to the headings and subheadings of your report (University of Newcastle, 2016). NOTE: the title of each part below also indicates what % of your word count should be dedicated to each section.

Executive Summary (10% of word count)

- Briefly state the purpose of the report.
- Briefly describe the methodology used to investigate the issue (for example, you may have conducted interviews, circulated a questionnaire, or carried out independent research).
- List the key points and findings found in the report.

Body (40% of word count)

- Provide details of the evaluation process.
- Describe in detail the methodology used to investigate the issue.
- Identify particular issues that impacted the evaluation.
- Include any relevant tables and/or diagrams.

Key Findings/Recommendations (40% of word count)

- Identify and discuss/describe the key findings.
- Make your recommendations.

Conclusion (10% of word count)

- Summarise your findings and relate back to original issue that has given rise to the report.

Remember...

This resource has been created to give you an idea of how to set out a business report. However, your lecturer may have some specific ideas of what should/should not be included in your assignment, or how it should be structured. Always consult with your lecturer if unsure.

Resource References

University of Newcastle. 2016. *Report Writing*.

https://www.newcastle.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/333773/LD-Report-Writing-LH.pdf