
Business Consulting Report Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

These notes should be used as guidelines by students for industrial engineering consulting projects. They are designed to make the report readable by busy people in the company.

REPORT OBJECTIVES AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

The report is intended to be read by senior managers and/or directors. Most senior managers will pay particular attention to the executive summary and then the conclusions and recommendations. They will also be interested in how thoroughly the work was done and how valid the results are.

The intended audience will have a good understanding of general business principles and are interested in the outcomes. They will have the authority to make decisions based on your report

The report objective should be to make sure that the senior managers/directors seriously consider accepting the conclusions and implementing the recommendations.

Pay particular attention to validating results and proving that conclusions and recommendations are useful and realistic. This may involve showing that input data represents reality to a sufficient extent and showing that the model produces outputs which are similar to historically obtained real data. Specific cases can also be modelled where the outputs can intuitively be seen to be valid. Expert opinion on the model outputs is also useful.

A literature review should be included since a comparison of methods and results with other published work adds credibility. Include the highly relevant and credible literature only.

REPORT STRUCTURE

The following format is recommended.

- Executive summary
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Objectives
- Literature review/previous work
- Methodology
- Observations
- Analysis
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions

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- Recommendations
 - References
 - Appendices

PROJECT OBJECTIVES & REPORT PLANNING

Define the objectives of the project. Many of these will come from the project brief but other objectives may have been added and the original objectives may have been changed at the intermediate feedback.

Determine conclusions and recommendations before starting to write the report. Where possible these should be macro points. Detailed points should normally be bulleted under a macro conclusion or recommendation. The recommendations should normally lead on from the conclusions, although, some conclusions will not lead to a recommendation.

Produce a provisional structure for the report giving the headings and subheadings. Make sure that the structure supports the conclusions and recommendations.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The report must be based on reliable and valid data. The procedures used to obtain the data must be explained in detail. Much effort must be expended on establishing data credibility.

Data Presentation

Make generous use of charts and figures to summarise data and to ensure it is presented in a concise form. Make graphical comparisons.

DISCUSSION

The discussion must be objective, balanced, justifiable and if possible quantifiable. Ensure that it is not opinionated and factual statements are supported by either the data presented or reliable references. Explain what the data means and what significance the findings have.

If the data is insufficient to support any conclusion, say so. Present both sides of arguments or reasoning.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensure all conclusions and recommendations arise from the results and discussion. Ensure that conclusions and recommendations are aligned with the mission and goals of the company.

REFERENCES

Make an effort to ensure reference credibility by using peer-reviewed literature, printed literature such as books or that produced in publications by journalists. Avoid any internet references unless you can establish their credibility.

WRITING STYLE

Use precise words and style. Avoid use of subjective quantity descriptions such as “very” or “little”. Ensure objectivity, avoid opinions and personal feelings or prejudice. Avoid emotional language such as guaranteed, tremendous, etc. Use impersonal style. Avoid filler words and verbosity such as basically, actually, undoubtedly, each and every one and during the course of our investigation.

The language, tone, and choice of words must be clear, appropriate, precise, simple and unambiguous.

Don't use possessive apostrophe ' for inanimate objects.

Ensure that what you write is factually accurate and verifiable. Never write anything which may misinform your readers or persuade them unfairly.

REFERENCES USED IN THIS GUIDE

Thompson, A “Entrepreneurship and Business Innovation” Guide to Business Report Writing” Guildford, W.A. : Vineyard Publishing, 2005

Okosina, M

[HTTP://EZINEARTICLES.COM/?MANAGEMENT-CONSULTING---CORPORATE-REPORT-WRITING&ID=1668029](http://ezinearticles.com/?MANAGEMENT-CONSULTING---CORPORATE-REPORT-WRITING&ID=1668029) Accessed 30 July 2010

[HTTP://WWW.HOWTOBOOKS.CO.UK/BUSINESS/REPORTS/](http://www.howtobooks.co.uk/business/reports/) Accessed 30 July 2010