

Business reports

- Business reports are written factual accounts that objectively, accurately and clearly communicate and document information about one or more aspects of a given business. The formats of business reports may vary from brief and informal reports to highly detailed formal reports with an appendix providing additional information, statistical data, diagrams, graphs, maps, tables, bar charts, line charts, pie charts, flow charts, organization charts, and even bibliography. BR (business reports) can also be classified as internal reports (for use within the company itself) and as external reports (sent to persons in other companies)

- Informal reports are usually short and may consist of one to five or six pages. For that reason, such reports are often written in the form of a letter or memo. In contrast with informal reports, formal reports are often written in impersonal terms. Pronouns such as “I” and “you” are frequently not used. Personal biases should be kept in check and emotionally charged language must be avoided. However, be sure the information in informal and formal business reports is accurate, reliable, and specific; contains all the relevant facts and figures.

- Formal business reports are longer and more detailed than brief informal reports. The proper format, style, length, and organization of a BR depends on the person or persons who originate this document, why it is prepared, what subject it covers, and who the recipients of the report are.

- A formal BR is an important management tool and should have a logical structure consisting of the following (optional) components:
 - Title page
 - Letter of transmittal
 - Table of contents
 - Executive summary or synopsis
 - Introduction
 - Main body of the report
 - Conclusions
 - Recommendations
 - Appendix
 - Bibliography

Title page

- This page includes the full title of the report; the name and title of the person who authorized the report; the name and title of the person who prepared the report; and the date on which the report was submitted.

Letter of Transmittal

- This letter is addressed to the person who authorized the report and states the report is ready

Table of contents

- The heading and subheadings that are used in the text of the report are frequently used as the basis for the table of contents. In addition, the beginning page number for each heading or subheading is given.

Executive summary or synopsis

- An executive summary provides in an abbreviated form all the relevant “highlights” (in particular the conclusions and recommendations) of a report. ES provides more information than a synopsis, which gives only a brief descriptive outline or general view of the report.

Introduction

- The introduction of a formal BR generally states the authorization for the report; the scope of the report (what the report covers or does not cover); and a brief description of the sources (e.g. personal interviews, field research, questionnaire, secondary sources, etc.) that have been used for the report. A list of definitions that are used in the report may also be included, although these definitions may also be explained in footnotes in the text itself.

Main body of the report

- The main body of the report consists of all chapters or sections that make up the report.

Conclusions

- Conclusions sum up the results, outcome, decisions, or judgment reached after the writing the report. A frequently used introductory sentence is the following: “The findings of this study lead to the following conclusions.”

Recommendations

- Recommendations describe a course of action on the basis of the facts as presented in the study. A frequently used introductory sentence is the following: “Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made.”

Appendix

- An appendix is a collection of supplementary material (e.g. charts, diagrams, and statistical, numerical, and financial information) at the end of a formal report.

Bibliography

- A bibliography is an alphabetical listing of sources of information in print on a specific subject – usually in the form of books, reference works, magazine or newspaper articles, government documents, and so forth – that have been consulted during the preparation of the study (report).