

FT Story Playbook: Timeline Stories

([link to the Danske article](#))

Danske Bank AS

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Danske: anatomy of a money laundering scandal

How the Danish bank found itself at the centre of a €200bn money laundering scandal

Richard Milne and Daniel Winter YESTERDAY



It is a terrific fall from grace. Danske Bank, Denmark's largest lender, has gone from being one of Europe's most respected financial institutions to getting caught red-handed in one of the world's biggest money laundering scandals.

Chief executive Thomas Borgen has promised to resign and authorities in several countries have launched investigations into the affair that saw €200bn of non-resident money flow through its Estonian branch from 2007 until 2015. What went wrong at one of Europe's most prestigious banks?

Early warning signs



About \$8.3bn in suspicious transactions have been alleged to have flowed through Danske's Estonian branch between 2007 and 2015 © Bloomberg

2007

Danske effectively established its Estonian unit by taking over Sampo Bank, including its Estonian branch.

Just months later, Estonia's financial regulator criticised Danske for underestimating compliance risks and having problems with know-your-customer rules.

Russia's central bank warned Danske that the Estonian branch was being used for dubious transactions either for widespread tax evasion or money laundering to the tune of billions of roubles a month.

2008

A plan to move all three Baltic subsidiaries on to the same IT platform as the rest of the group was abandoned, meaning Estonia did not have the same anti-money laundering checks as the head office in Copenhagen.

Where can I find it?

You can choose the 'Timeline Story' template when you create a new story in Methode under the World, Companies, Markets and Features baskets.

What is it good for?

- **The story so far:** [catching readers up](#) in an ongoing news story; having a summary story ahead of [the big tick-tock piece](#).
 - The most compelling timeline stories have a narrative arc, and clearly highlight the turning points in the saga.
 - They should be written with flair and not read like a wikipedia page
- **What happens next?** Reminding readers of [key upcoming dates](#)

Timeline stories are good evergreen pieces, and benefit from re-use and repromotion as the story continues to develop.

What is it not good for?

- If it's just a list. This looks like a structured format but it's still a story: What's the hook? Where's the sweep?
- If it gets too long. Don't give in to the temptation to list everything that happened

What are good FT examples?

Danske: anatomy of a money laundering scandal

Richard Milne and Daniel Winter

<https://www.ft.com/content/519ad6ae-bcd8-11e8-94b2-17176bf93f5>

Brexit timeline: key dates in UK's divorce with EU

James Blitz, Alex Barker and George Parker

<https://www.ft.com/content/64e7f218-4ad4-11e7-919a-1e14ce4af89b>

How long does it take to make one of these?

Writing and editing are the most time-consuming parts of putting together a Timeline story. It's safest to budget around 5 hours from commissioning to publication, even though you could sometimes do one quicker.

This means that the Timeline story is best seen as an overnight story, or a piece prepped in advance for scheduled 5am publication.

Detailed Production Guide

Who do I need to talk to

- Someone to write the words. Ask for:
 - An introductory paragraph, ideally no more than 100 words
 - The key turning points in the story.
- Ask either Kevin's design team or the pictures desk for:
 - A master image for the article
- Notify the social media team

What do I do

Production

- Create a new story in methode, and choose the "Timeline" template.
- Copy or write in the intro par and text for each point in the timeline
- If you are inserting charts: Find the chart images in methode. There will be between 2 to 3 images for each chart (Small, Medium and Large - sometimes there's only Small and Medium). Drag them into the corresponding slots in the image set.
 - Chart image sets don't work if they are placed within the timeline layout component
 - If you need more charts than are in the template: copy and paste one of the image sets
 - If you don't need as many charts as are in the template: just delete the image sets.
- Write headline, insert master image, and other web furniture. Fill out metadata, run Tansa, and release to web-revise

Headline

- Err on the side of using 'timeline' somewhere in the headlines for these, with exceptions when common sense dictates.

If you run into trouble...

Please talk to Neil Way (____@ft.com), Robin Kwong (____@ft.com), Richard Martin (____@ft.com), or the creative producer on your desk.

LONG HEADLINE (MAX 65 CHARS)

[Timeline Story]

SHORT HEADLINE (MAX 50 CHARS)

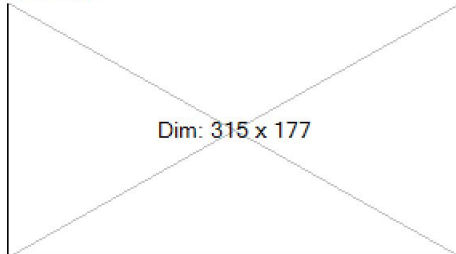
[Short headline]

STANDFIRST (MAX 85 CHARS)

[Standfirst]

STORY PACKAGE HYPERLINK [Story package hyperlink]

MASTER IMAGE



[Insert author]

[Write your intro par here. This should contain the hook that makes the story compelling, and have the sweep to explain why it's important.]

[Timeline stories are good for catching reader up in an ongoing news story, particularly in the days before we have a full tick-tock. They are most compelling when they have a narrative arc, and clearly highlight the turning points in the saga. They should be written with flair and not read like a wikipedia page.]

[They can also be future-looking: reminding readers of key upcoming dates.]

See here for a good example: <https://www.ft.com/content/519ad6ae-bcd8-11e8-94b2-17176fb93f5>

Timeline header

[Image]
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If you need to add a responsive graphic please add it outside of the Timeline layout and then continue in another layout beneath it. Copy and paste the image sets and Timeline layouts as you need them.