

Working With McKinsey

Insights on working with / for current / former management consultants

Home	Why I started this blog	Who this blog is for	Label definitions	Disclaimer	McKinsey Acronym Guide
------	-------------------------	----------------------	-------------------	------------	------------------------

Friday, November 16, 2012

What's with all these Appendix pages in our decks?

I was just asked by a friend why the former McKinsey Partner to whom she reports wants PowerPoint decks with detailed Appendix pages, so that's the topic addressed in this post. I'll go over...

1. Definition of Appendix or back-up pages
2. Why McKinsey consultants use Appendix pages
 - In team and client discussion documents
 - In client deliverable documents

What are Appendix or back-up pages?

Consultants spend a lot of time working in Microsoft PowerPoint (PPT) creating **pages** that are assembled into **decks**. Most McKinsey decks are comprised of two primary sections, the **main deck** and the **Appendix**, also referred to as **back-up pages**. It's not uncommon for the Appendix to be significantly longer than the main deck. If the main deck tells the story, the Appendix **contains all of the supporting evidence**.

Why do we use Appendix or back-up pages?

Follow on Twitter

@WorkingWithMcK

Posts by Label:

- [Aspiring Consultant](#) (39)
- [Aspiring Direct Report](#) (15)
- [Client](#) (6)
- [Consultant](#) (48)
- [Direct report](#) (45)
- [Personal](#) (9)
- [Supervisor](#) (10)

Blog Archive

► [2014](#) (5)

► [2013](#) (46)

▼ [2012](#) (22)

► [December](#) (5)

▼ [November](#) (17)

[Common coffee chat mistakes - 7 ways candidates sc...](#)

Appendix pages take as much time and effort to make - sometimes even more - as the pages in the main deck. The reason for including Appendix pages often depends on the reason for the document. Generally speaking, McKinsey engagement teams create two types of decks:

DISCUSSION DOCUMENTS

These are decks **used to drive client or team discussions** - examples include progress updates and collaborative problem solving sessions. In these cases the main deck is often light, featuring just enough thought starters and information to keep the conversation moving in the right direction. In these decks, Appendices are often used to include **data or evidence** that could contribute to the discussion. They might not be included in the main deck if they might be too leading or controversial, but teams might want to have **data in their back pocket** in case facts or hypotheses are called into question.

CLIENT DELIVERABLES

There are usually more substantial decks - sometimes hundreds of pages long - that are **given to the client at major milestones** (e.g., Steering Committee meetings) and/or at the conclusion of an engagement. These extensive, detailed documents contain all of the data, findings, and insights generated over the course of the study. I've heard several reasons why these decks contain so many Appendix pages:

- **Keep the storyline of the main deck crisp and clear** by moving the supporting documentation and details to the Appendix where they will be out of the way but available for reference. **Trackers** (I'll address these in a future post) can be used to link sections of the main deck to their corresponding Appendix pages
- **You never know when a certain piece of information will be helpful** so we might as well hand it off to the client. Sometimes the data comes in handy during the meeting. In most cases the material in these documents is **pre-wired or syndicated** with key clients prior to the meeting to ensure everyone is aligned with the content. But, questions still come up, in which case **supporting evidence and analyses** in the Appendix can be referenced to help answer difficult questions or resolve disagreements

Recruiting coffee chats - 4 tips for McKinsey pre-...

5 Tips for McKinsey Resume (CV) Screens and Cover ...

Typical day in the life of a McKinsey consultant -...

Leaving McKinsey - 5 approaches to using search time

Always have your 30-second answer ready - the elev...

How to impress your McKinsey boss - Consulting roc...

Flying with McKinsey - packing light

Flying with McKinsey - checking in bags is not all...

You only get to leave McKinsey once - 6 important ...

Were you asked to "be more 80/20" by a McKinsey pe...

Leaving McKinsey - when to start "search time"

Leaving McKinsey - when to decide

What's with all these Appendix pages in our decks?

How to give McKinsey-style feedback: The McKinsey...

Feedback overload - now my McKinsey boss wants my ...

How to keep your McKinsey boss happy - 3 tips for ...

About Me

Former McKinsey Consultant

MBA, former McKinsey management consultant, and alum of several

- **Giving the client their money's worth** is the most cynical reason I've heard for why we pack the Appendix full of lots of data, exhibits, and analyses. The rationale is that clients pay high fees for the engagement so they're expecting a large volume of work product along with the insights and recommendations contained within the main deck. I don't necessarily agree with this thinking, but I have heard it mentioned

Posted by [Former McKinsey Consultant](#) at [11:39 PM](#)

Labels: [Client](#), [Consultant](#), [Direct report](#)

2 comments:



Unknown January 27, 2015 at 9:38 PM

Very interesting! This work is really satisfactory for us. Thanks <http://entertainment-articles-guide.com>

[Reply](#)



S B June 8, 2018 at 8:03 AM

Amazingly explained, I will definitely use this rationale in my decks going forward.

[Reply](#)

Enter your comment...

Comment as: [Google Account](#) ▼

[Publish](#)

[Preview](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

Fortune 500 companies with a passion for coaching and development. I'd like to share what I've learned to (a) help others - especially entrepreneurs, small business owners, and startups - understand business concepts and (b) better cope with the McKinsey (or Bain or BCG) consultants in their lives

[View my complete profile](#)

My Blog List



Business Concepts 101

Cost of Stockout vs. Overstock - 6 Factors to Consider and Why It's Not Just for Physical Goods

7 years ago

Subscribe To



Posts



Comments



Simple theme. Powered by [Blogger](#).