What is a Business Report?

A business report is a structured document, generally commissioned by a person or organisation (a company, government department or another organisation such as WHO or the UN) to explore an issue, or problem. The report is designed to explore that issue and its impact, and then give recommendations on how to address it. These are formal documents that should provide information and advice to help decision makers deal effectively with the issue.

Steps to writing a Business Report

1. **Plan** your report:

Consider the **target audience**.

• What prior knowledge will the readers have on the issue?

• What background, definitions, and other information will they need to know?

• Is the audience internal or external to the organisation, or both?

• Why would they be interested in this issue?

2. Understand the current **context**.

Depending on the issues of the report, you may need to **investigate the organisation** you are focusing on. This may include examining:

• The organisation's website;

• Organisation reports;

• Industry information and standards;

• Websites and reports on competitors

Explore the literature to gain information on the issue, identify best practice and alternative solutions.

3. Create an **outline** of the report

- **Jot down notes** using headings (see suggested headings for sections in the table below)

- Make sure the links between each section are **clear and logical** (i.e. how does the discussion inform the recommendations made?)

4. **Write** your report

- Write the **introduction** and work your way through the different sections to ensure you develop a **clear line of reasoning**.

- Use **numbered headings** and subheadings with bullet points or numbers as this makes the information easier to understand.

- Write **clear and concise sentences** and paragraphs.

- **Edit** your work after you have finished the report.

How to structure a Business Report

This information may be found in your unit guide. If your tutor or unit guide does not specify the structure, you can adopt the following.

Business Reports
Tips for success

Murdoch University

Suggested Heading	Purpose
Cover Page	This must look professional. Include: • The title of the report • Who commissioned the report • The author's name • The date the report was completed.
Contents page	Includes all main headings and sub-headings.
Executive Summary	Summarises the main points from each section of the report.
Introduction	Introduces the issue, the background history, current context and issue/s (if any). Include: • The issue being addressed • The purpose/objectives of the report • Who authorised/commissioned the report • Terms of reference and/or limitations • Information sources used • An overview of the report structure. To provide context you may include some information on the organisation being discussed.
Discussion	Outlines the issue being discussed, the context being considered and your position on the impacts of the issue and your recommended solutions. Consider: • How does this issue affect the organisation? • What is the impact of this issue on the organisation? • What are the short/long term benefits of taking action on this issue? • What will happen if the issue is not addressed? You can use subheadings to organise the discussion. Ensure you reference all sources used to support your position.
Recommendations	Suggests practical ways in which the findings can be used to improve the situation investigated in the report. • Organise your recommendations by order of importance • Consider factors such as cost, required resources and benefits to the organisation
Conclusion	Summarises and reminds the read of the key findings and recommendations from the report. This should be short and succinct but can repeat information from the discussion and recommendation sections.
References	Lists the academic and other sources of information that were used to inform this report. Check the unit guide for details on the referencing style expected (e.g., APA, Chicago etc.)

Adapted from: The University of Melbourne, Curtin University

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