








The data project workflow

Elements of communication

Communicate like a data professional

-  **Video:** Connect PACE with upcoming course themes  
3 min
-  **Reading:** The value of the PACE strategy document  
20 min
-  **Reading:** Communicate objectives with a project proposal  
20 min
-  **Reading:** Connect PACE with executive summaries  
20 min
-  **Practice Quiz:** Activity: Analyze a project proposal  
5 questions
-  **Discussion Prompt:** Recall a past project through PACE  
10 min
-  **Practice Quiz:** Test your knowledge: Communicate like a data professional  
2 questions

Review: Data applications and workflow

# Connect PACE with executive summaries

In this reading, you will continue to examine communication within the data workspace. In this course, you explored the PACE (Plan, Analyze, Construct, Execute) workflow and how it can help guide projects. Through PACE, the tasks and deliverables of a project are clearly identified and recorded in a PACE strategy document. The information identified in the PACE document is essential to the data professionals working on the necessary tasks. Also, decision makers may need to know information about a project, as you discovered in the RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed) matrix readings earlier in the course.

Regardless of workflow, data professionals need ways to share and communicate plans, updates, and summaries about projects. A common document called an executive summary is used to update decision makers who may not be directly involved in the tasks of a project. In your role as a data professional, you will often be involved in creating executive summaries.

## Executive summaries

Executive summaries are documents that collect the most important points contained in a longer plan or report. These summaries are common across a wide variety of businesses, giving decision makers a brief overview of the most relevant information. They can also be used to help new team members become acquainted with the details of a project quickly. The format is designed to respect the responsibilities of decision makers and/or executives who may not have time to read and understand an entire report. There are many ways to present information within an executive summary, including software options built specifically for that purpose. In this program, you will be focusing primarily on a one page format within a presentation slide. Regardless of how they are created, there are some items that are commonly included.

### Elements of an executive summary

The provided sample executive summary deals with an imagined wildfire predictability project undertaken by the U.S. National Park Service. The intended audience of this summary is a group of decision makers from many different departments within the National Park Service. The purpose of this summary is to share the insights gained through data analysis of wildfires in the US. Each section delivers a short statement without embellishment. This allows decision makers who are often short on time the ability to quickly grasp the most relevant points about a project. Reference this document as you review each of the following sections.

Below you will find a sample executive summary for an imagined project on wildfire predictability.

To access the sample executive summary, click the link below and select “Use Template.”

Link to sample executive summary: [Wildfire prediction project executive summary](#) 

OR

If you don’t have a Google account, you can download the file directly from the attachment below.



**Wildfire prediction project executive summary.pdf**  
PDF File

- Project title:** A project's theme is incorporated into the executive summary title to create an immediate connection with the target audience.
- The problem:** A statement that focuses on the need or concern being targeted or addressed by the project. Note, also, that the problem can also be referred to as the hypothesis that you’re trying to prove through data analysis.
- The solution:** This statement summarizes a project’s main goal. In this section, actions are described that are intended to address the concerns outlined in the problem statement.
- Details/Key Insights:** The purpose of this section is to provide any additional background and information that may assist the target audience in understanding the project’s objectives. Determining what details to include depends heavily on the intended audience. It may also be the case that you choose to include some project reflections.
- Next steps/Recommendations:** Information that supports the intended actions the team plans to take. This can also include recommendations for decision makers based on the insights gained over the course of the project. In this section, a data professional may also include general project reflections. When you are adding to this section, please add at least one point for recommendations and one for the suggested next steps.

You will discover that PACE strategy documents are a great reference when working on executive summaries. When planning, analyzing, constructing, and executing your end-of-course and capstone projects, the PACE strategy documents provide questions to guide you. The information in your responses will assist you in creating an executive summary that will inform decision makers.The more time you spend considering and answering each question, the more information you’ll have available to you.

## Key takeaways

Executive summaries are important ways to share information with decision makers, clients, and executives. These documents include a summarized version of the most important information within a project or plan of action. The executive summary is usually broader in scope, not focusing on specific responsibilities or tasks. The executive summary summarizes the status of a project and its discoveries, describing a problem and proposing a solution.