



The Art & Science of Report Writing

By Michael Born – April 5, 2019



My Origin Story

Previously

- FAA Weather Observer
- Broadcast Meteorologist
- Software Consultant
- IT Director
- Associate Security Consultant
- Security Consultant

Overview

- Knowing your audience
- Voice type (passive vs. active)
- Elements of a good report
- Pros and Cons of graphical communication
- Danger terms



Typical Report Audience

- Executives
- Middle Management
- Technical
- Other
 - QSAs
 - Clients of clients





Communication Styles

- External Processor
 - Long and flowy
 - Extra details
- Internal Processor
 - To the point
 - Necessary details only
- In the Middle

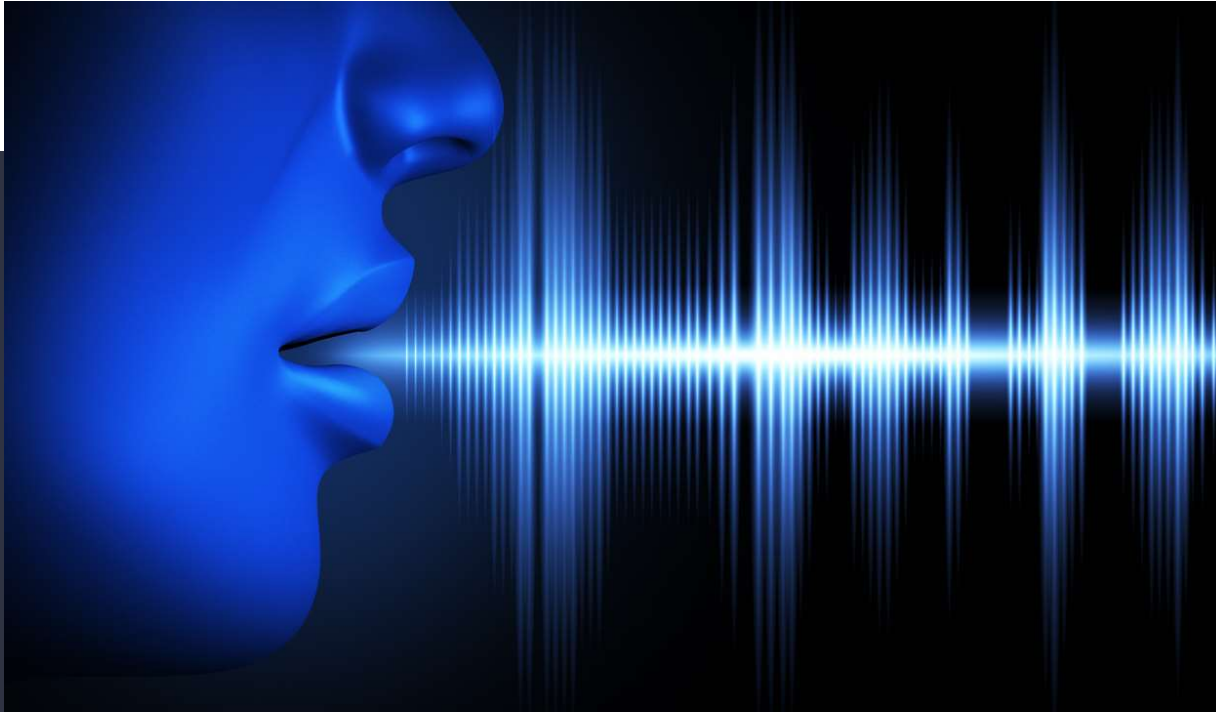


Passive Voice

- Weakens communication
- Use only in certain situations

Example

The road was crossed by the chicken.



Active Voice

- Preferred voice
- Effectively communicates to many styles
- Clearly lays out subject, verb(s), and object

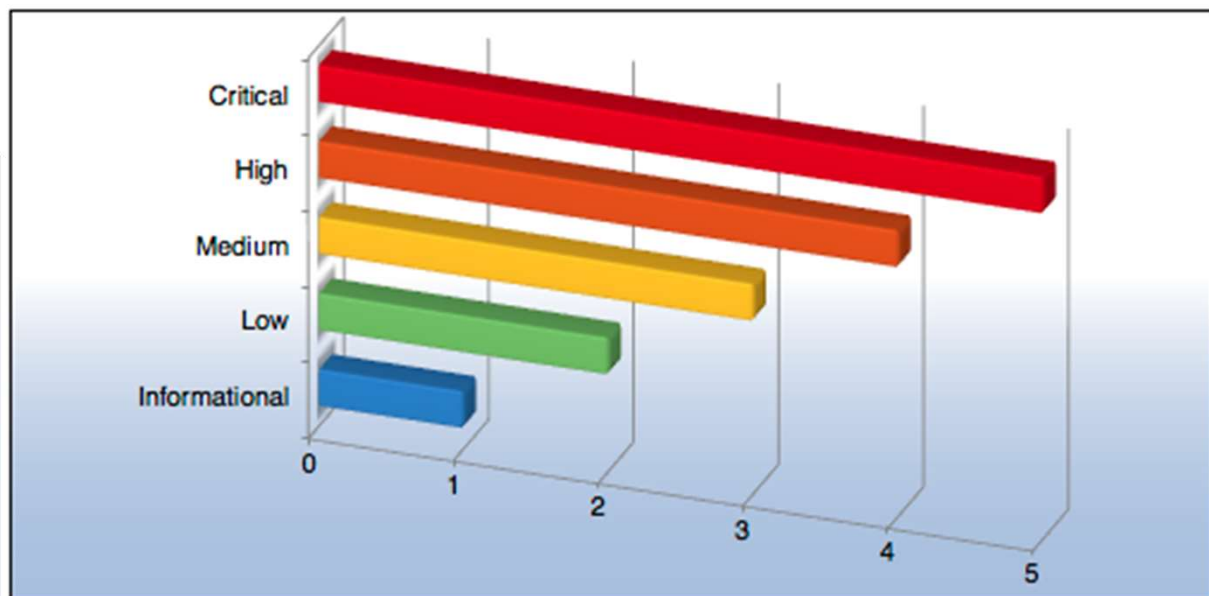
Example

The chicken crossed the road.

Report Elements

- Title Page
- Legal Jargon
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Executive Summary
- Management Summary
- Narrative
- Technical Finding Details
- Appendix

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Critical	High	Medium	Low	Informational
5	4	3	2	1

Pros

- More with less
- Emphasize with colors

Cons

- Can overuse
- Vuln scan look

Recommended Use

- Executive Summary
- Management Summary
- Risk Rating

Graphical Communication

Danger Words & Phrases

Danger Items

1. Leakage
2. Issues
3. Problems
4. Use of first person
5. Blaming/Shaming
6. Use of Should/Could/Would

Professional Alternatives

1. Disclosure
2. Gaps
3. Specific configurations
4. Use third person
5. Observations/Discoveries
6. Make recommendations



Thank You!

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