

COM310-902

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# Chapter 13



Writing Recommendation Reports

# Overview



Understanding the Role of Recommendation Reports



Using a Problem-Solving Model for Preparing Recommendation Reports




Writing Recommendation Reports



## What is a Recommendation Letter?

- It presents information but goes one step further by offering suggestions about what the readers ought to do **next**.



## **Recommendation Reports Address These Questions:**

What should we do about Problem X?  
(How should we address Problem X?)

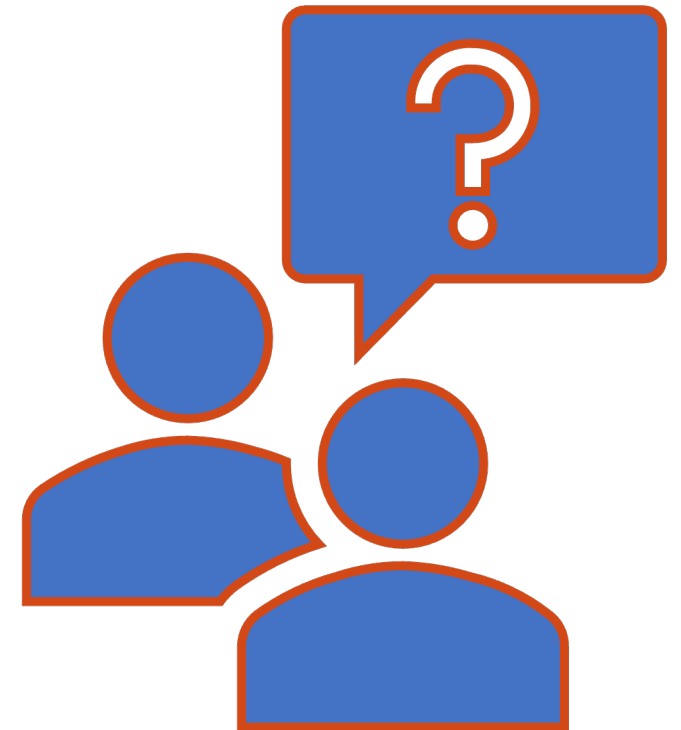
Should we do Function X?  
(Is Function X necessary?)

Should we use Technology A or  
Technology B for Function X?

We currently use Method A to do  
Function X. Should we switch from  
Method A to Method B for Function X?

# Recommendation Reports

- Can be the culmination of series of documents: starting with a proposal and possibly followed by progress
- Often referred to as final report, project report, completions report, or simply a report.
- Can also be an independent document, without preceding proposals or progress reports.
- Commonly explores **feasibility**: the practicality of a potential course of action.
  - **Possibility**: Can it be done?
  - **Economic Wisdom**: Is it financially viable?
  - **Perception**: How will stakeholders react?



# Writing Process for a Recommendation Report: Similar Model with Other Technical Communication



# Writing Process for a Recommendation Report: Problem-Solving Model

## 1. Identify the problem or opportunity.

- For effective research, using a clear statement is important.

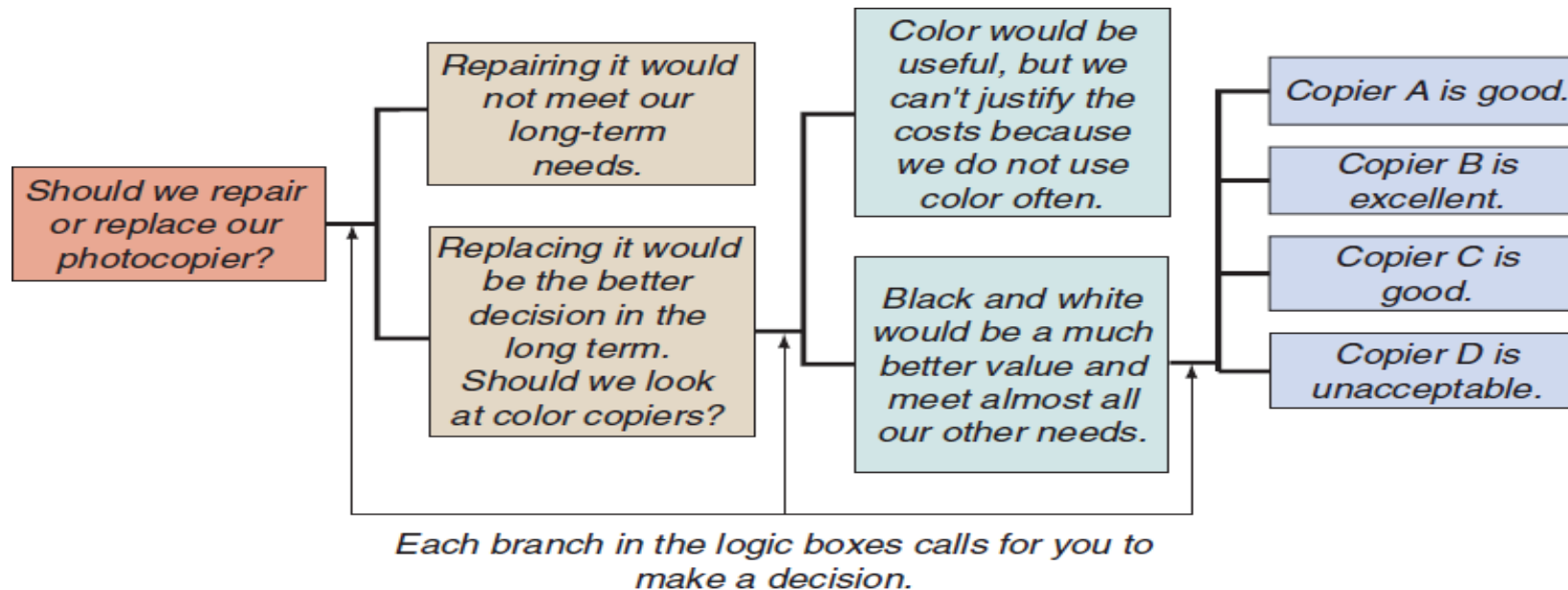
## 2. Establish criteria for responding to the problem or opportunity.

- Necessary vs. Desirable Criteria
- Necessary: general criterial such as product/services' functions
- Desirable: distinctions among a variety of similar objects/services
- Criteria might be given by your supervisor or derived from your own research.

# Writing Process for a Recommendation Report: Problem-Solving Model

## 3. Determine the options.

- Identify potential actions or solutions.
- Options might be given or derived.
- It is useful to apply logic boxes or flowcharts to sketch the logic of your options:





# Writing Process for a Recommendation Report: Problem-Solving Model

## 4. Study Each Option According to the Criteria

- Using secondary and primary research.
- Decision matrix: A tool for evaluating each option according to each criterion.
- It is necessary to explain weights and ratings; justify choices in the decision matrix.

Criteria and Weight		Options					
		Ricoh		Xerox		Sharp	
Criterion	Weight	Rating	Score <sup>(1)</sup>	Rating	Score <sup>(1)</sup>	Rating	Score <sup>(1)</sup>
Pages/min.	1	9	9	6	6	3	3
Duplex	3	1	3	3	9	10	30
Color	4	10	40	1	4	10	40
Total Score			52		19		73

<sup>(1)</sup>Score = weight × rating.

# Writing Process for a Recommendation Report: Problem-Solving Model

## 4. Study Each Option According to the Criteria

- Explain your decision matrix by
  - Justifying your choices. (Why did you choose?; Why didn't you choose?)
  - Explaining weights assigned to each criterion.
  - Clarifying ratings given to each option.

# Writing Process for a Recommendation Report: Problem-Solving Model

## 5. Draw Conclusions about Each Option

- Interpret results & evaluating options.
- Methods to present conclusions: ranking, classification (acceptable or unacceptable), or compound conclusion.

## 6. Formulate Recommendations Based on the Conclusions

- Base recommendations on derived conclusions
- Consider external factors or changes in the problem
- The aim is recommending the best course of action.



# Writing Recommendation Reports

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1. Structured approach tailored to **audience, purpose, and subject**.
2. Three main sections in a recommendation report:
  - a. Front matter
  - b. Body
  - c. Back matter



You'll likely draft the **body first, then the front and back matter**, as it helps clarify your main points.

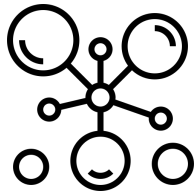
# Body

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## Purpose

- Comprehensive account of the project, from motivation to key findings.



## Elements

- Introduction
- Methods
- Results
- Conclusions
- Recommendations



Elements are in their usual order, but you can **customize** the drafting order based on preference.

# Body: Introduction



## Aim

- Help readers understand the subsequent technical discussion



## Elements

- Subject of the report
- Purpose of the report
- Background information
- Report's scope
- The most significant findings
- Recommendations overview
- Organization of the report
- Key terms



## Body: Methods



### Aim

- “What did you do?”



### Details

- Tailor details based on reader’s knowledge, perception, project uniqueness, and their reasons for reading.
- Ensure clarity for replication if required.



## Body: Results



### Aim

- “What did you see or determine?”



### Details

- Present data without bias or interpretation.
- Adjust presentation based on audience's needs





## **Body: Conclusions**



### **Aim**

- “What does it mean?”



### **Details**

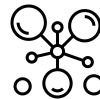
- Implication of the results.
- Analyze results to deduce clear meanings.

## Body: Recommendations



### Aim

- “What should we do?”
- Not always a direct result of conclusions.



### Consider:

- **Content:** Be specific and clear in suggesting alternatives.
- **Tone:** Maintain respectful and objective (not offensive!) tone for better persuasion.
- **Form:** Consider paragraph vs. numbered list based on the number of recommendations.
- **Location:** Consider put it after executive summary, introduction, or at the end.

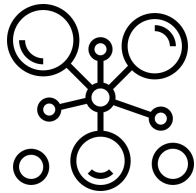
# Front Matter

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## **Purpose**

- Help readers understand the whole report and locate specific information.



## **Elements**

- Letter of transmittal
- Cover
- Title page
- Abstract
- Table of contents
- List of illustrations
- Executive summary



## **Front Matter: Letter of Transmittal**

- Introduce the reader to the purpose and content.
- Mention who authorized the report.
- Set a courteous and professional tone.



## **Front Matter: Cover**

- May be used in physically handled or environmentally exposed reports.
- Contains title, writer's name, submission date, company logo.
- Potential inclusion: Security notice, proprietary information statement.



## **Front Matter: Title Page**

- Essential components:
  - Report title
  - Writer's name
  - Submission date
- Additional details
  - Project number
  - Contributor names
  - Distribution list



## Front Matter: Abstract

- Brief technical summary, under 200 words:
  - **Descriptive:** lists topics covered
  - **Informative:** presents major findings
  - Sometimes, you need to combine both.
- Keywords to guide database searches



## Front Matter: Tables of Contents

- Guide readers through the report.
- Use headings and subheadings from the report.
- Same typeface and design of the headings in the report.
- Levels diversified through type style (**bold** vs *italics*) and indentation.
- Numbering styles:
  - For front matter, lowercase Roman numerals (e.g., page i, page ii ...)
  - For report body, Arabic numerals





## **Front Matter: List of Illustrations**

- Overview of figures and tables.
- Sequence: figures first, then tables
- Can be on the same or separate page from the table of contents.



## **Front Matter: Executive Summary**

- Brief condensation for managers.
- Focus on managerial implications.
- Length: Typically, 1 page for shorter reports, possibly 5% of longer reports.
- Guidelines
  1. Describe problem or opportunity with specific evidence.
  2. Be precise in describing research.
  3. Describe methods briefly.
  4. Tailor findings to your readers' needs.
  5. Engage an external reviewer.

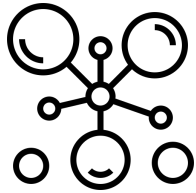
# Back Matter

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## Purpose

- Provide supplementary information to help readers to consult the secondary sources



## Elements

- Glossary
- List of Symbols
- References
- Appendix



## **Back Matter: Glossary & List of Symbols**

- **Glossary**
  - Alphabetical list of definitions.
  - Useful for technical vocabulary.
  - Highlighting system: Use boldface or similar for terms defined in the glossary.
  - It can be located near the end or after table of contents if brief.
- **List of Symbols**
  - Defines symbols and abbreviations.
  - It can be located before appendixes or after table of contents.



## **Back Matter: References & Appendixes**

- **References**
  - = Bibliography or List of works cited.
  - Importance of documentation:
    - Acknowledge sources
    - Establish writer credibility.
    - Assist readers in locating and reviewing sources.
- **Appendixes**
  - Section following the report body.
  - Contain bulky information or details for specific readers.
  - Examples: Maps, large diagrams, test data, supporting documents
  - Labeling: Letters (e.g., Appendix A)
  - Listed in the table of contents and referred within the report easy access