

ELEVENTH EDITION

EXPLORING  
**Marketing** Research



Barry Babin | William Zikmund

# Chapter 16

## Communicating Research Results

# LEARNING OUTCOMES

*After studying this chapter, you should*

1. Create an outline for a research project using the basic parts of a final report
2. Explain how to use tables for presenting numerical information
3. Summarize how to select and use the types of research charts
4. Know how to give an effective oral presentation
5. Discuss the importance of Internet reporting and research follow-up

# Introduction

- The research report is a crucial means for communicating the whole project's benefits
  - When people who need to use the research results have to wade through a disorganized presentation, find themselves confused by technical jargon, or find sloppiness of language or thought, they will probably discount the report and make decisions as if the project never started

# The Project and the Report

- A research report is a formal presentation and/or a written statement that communicates research results and draws appropriate conclusions following from a research project

# The Project and the Report (cont'd.)

- The report provides the “answers” and documents procedures to the interested audience
  - For an applied market research project, the report presents the results accomplishing the proposal’s deliverables including specific managerial recommendations
  - Deliverables should be a logical conclusion of the report contents

# The Research Report

- A basic marketing researcher writes a similar report that often takes the form of a white paper or scholarly research paper targeted for publication in a research journal
  - Examples: the Journal of Marketing, the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, or the Journal of Business Research
- A written research report often coincides with a formal presentation delivered in person and/or via the Internet

# Report Format

- Major elements
  - Title page
  - Letter of transmittal
  - Letter of authorization
  - Table of contents (and lists of figures and tables)
  - Executive summary
    - ❖ Objectives
    - ❖ Results
    - ❖ Conclusions
    - ❖ Recommendations

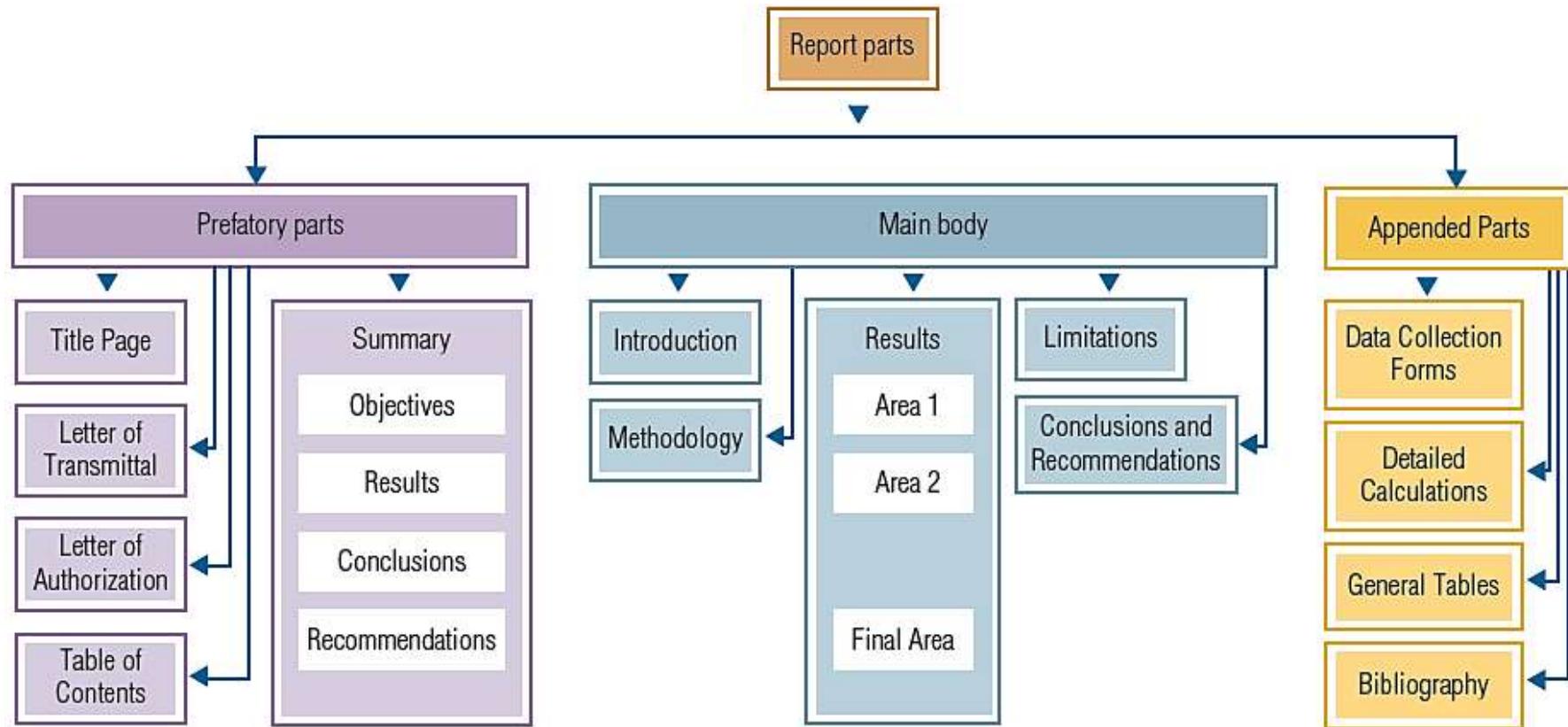
# Report Format: Body and Objectives

- Body
  - Introduction
- Objectives
  - Methodology
  - Results
  - Limitations
  - Conclusions and recommendations

# Report Format: Appendix

- Contains
  - Data collection forms
  - Detailed calculations
  - General tables
  - Bibliography
  - Other support material

## EXHIBIT 16.1 Report Format



Source: © Cengage Learning 2013.

# Tailoring the Format to the Project

- The format may need adjustment:
  - To obtain the proper level of formality and
  - To decrease the complexity of the report
- A formal type of report is usually bound in a permanent cover and may be hundreds of pages
  - How does the researcher decide on the appropriate level of formality?
    - ❖ The general rule is to include all the parts needed for effective communication in the particular circumstances
    - ❖ This depends on how far up in management the report is expected to go and how routine the matter is

# The Parts of the Report

- The title page should state the title of the report, for whom the report was prepared, by whom it was prepared, and the date of release or presentation
  - The title should give a brief but complete indication of the purpose of the research project
    - ❖ Not more than 12 words
  - Include addresses, titles of the preparer and recipient
    - ❖ On confidential reports, list the people to whom the report should be circulated
    - ❖ For the most formal reports, the title page is preceded by a title fly page, which contains only the report's title

# Letter of Transmittal

- Included in relatively formal to very formal reports
  - A transmittal letter's opening paragraph releases the report and briefly identifies the factors of authorization
  - The letter comments generally on findings and matters of interest regarding the research
  - The closing section expresses the writer's personal interest in the project just completed and in doing additional, related work
  - Overall, the letter explains how the report represents a key deliverable and invites further discussion on the matter

# Letter of Authorization

- A letter to the researcher that approves the project, details who has responsibility for it, and describes the resources available to support it
  - Not written by the researcher
- In many situations, simply referring to the authorization in the letter of transmittal is sufficient and need not be included in the report
- In cases where the reader may be unfamiliar with the authorization, the report should include an exact copy of the original letter

# The Table of Contents

- Essential to any report more than a few pages long
- Should list the divisions and subdivisions (only the first-level subdivisions) of the report with page references
  - If the report includes many figures or tables, a list of these should immediately follow the table of contents

# The Executive Summary

- Briefly explains why the research project was conducted, what aspects of the problem were considered, what the outcome was, and what should be done
- A vital part of the report
  - Studies have indicated that nearly all managers read a report's summary; only a minority read the rest of the report
- Should be written only after the rest of the report has been completed

# The Executive Summary (cont'd.)

- Should be one page long or, at most, two pages
- Should be written to be self-sufficient—it is often detached from the report and circulated by itself
- The summary contains four elements
  - The objectives of the report, including the most important background information and the specific purposes of the project
  - The methodology and the major results
  - The conclusions
  - Recommendations, or suggestions for action, based on the conclusions

# The Body

- Begins with an introduction section
  - Explains why the project was done and what it aimed to discover
  - Includes the basic authorization and submittal data
  - Includes enough background to explain why the project was worth doing
  - The last part explains exactly what the project tried to discover, discussing the statement of the problem and research questions as they were stated in the research proposal

# The Research Methodology Section of the Body

- Research design
  - Was the study exploratory, descriptive, or causal? Did the data come from primary or secondary sources? Were results collected by survey, observation, or experiment?
- Sample design
  - What was the target population? What is the sampling frame? What sample units are selected? How were they selected? How large was the sample? What was the response rate?

# The Research Methodology Section of the Body (cont'd.)

- Data collection and fieldwork
  - How many and what types of fieldworkers were used? What training and supervision did they receive? Was the work verified?
- Analysis
  - This section should outline the general statistical methods used in the study, but the information presented here should not overlap with what is presented in the results section

# The Results Section of the Body

- Should make up the bulk of the report and present those findings of the project that bear on the objectives
  - Design to be convincing but not to oversell the project
  - Use summary tables and charts (but save comprehensive or detailed ones for the appendix)

# The Conclusions and Recommendations Section of the Body

- The last part of the body
  - Conclusions are opinions based on the results
  - Recommendations are suggestions for action

# Appendix

- Presents the “too . . .” material
  - Includes any material that is too technical or too detailed to go in the body
  - Examples: data collection forms, detailed calculations, discussions of highly technical questions, detailed or comprehensive tables of results, and a bibliography (if appropriate)
  - Much appendix material is posted on internal Web pages

# Basic Marketing Research Report

- The outline above applies especially to applied market research projects
- Basic research reports (e.g., published in an academic business journal) have a slightly different outline since some components become irrelevant

# Basic Marketing Research Report: Outline

- 1. Abstract
- 2. Introduction
- 3. Background
  - a. Literature review
  - b. Hypotheses
- 4. Research Methods
- 5. Results
- 6. Appendices
- 7. Discussion
  - a. Implications
  - b. Limitations
  - c. Future research
- 8. Conclusions
- 9. References

# Using Tables Effectively

- Used properly, graphic aids can clarify complex points or emphasize a message
  - Used improperly or sloppily, they can be distracting or misleading
  - Work best when they are an integral part of the text, and they should always be interpreted in the text
- Several types of graphic aids may be useful in research reports: tables, charts, maps, and diagrams

# Creating Tables

- Most useful for presenting numerical information, especially when several pieces of information have been gathered about each item discussed
- Include the following for each table:
  - Table number
  - Title
  - Subheads and bannerheads
  - Notes
  - Source notes

## EXHIBIT 16.2 Basic Data Table Illustration

Number of Graphic	Table 162E. Bottled Water Sales Volume—2001 to 2011 (In millions of \$US)											Title	Column Headings
Country	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011		
World-wide	55,618	59,543	63,950	66,916	71,092	75,851	81,112	84,866	88,862	93,239	98,058		
United States	10,247	11,413	12,253	13,214	14,343	15,610	16,966	17,010	17,107	17,217	17,343		
Germany	9,427	9,979	10,577	10,728	11,281	11,958	12,648	13,293	13,931	14,573	15,212		
China	1,497	1,752	2,214	2,589	3,246	4,028	4,971	6,108	7,474	9,122	11,104		
Italy	5,824	6,135	6,500	6,675	6,972	7,276	7,590	7,910	8,231	8,547	8,862		
France	4,191	4,251	4,287	4,323	4,364	4,409	4,520	4,620	4,706	4,782	4,851		
Japan	2,445	2,682	2,973	3,236	3,374	3,531	3,702	3,887	4,091	4,319	4,573		
Brazil	2,620	2,651	2,713	2,884	3,059	3,224	3,390	3,578	3,780	4,009	4,268		

Note: Sales volume based on average retail price per liter by total liters sold by country.  
Source: Data Monitor Interactive Consumer Database.

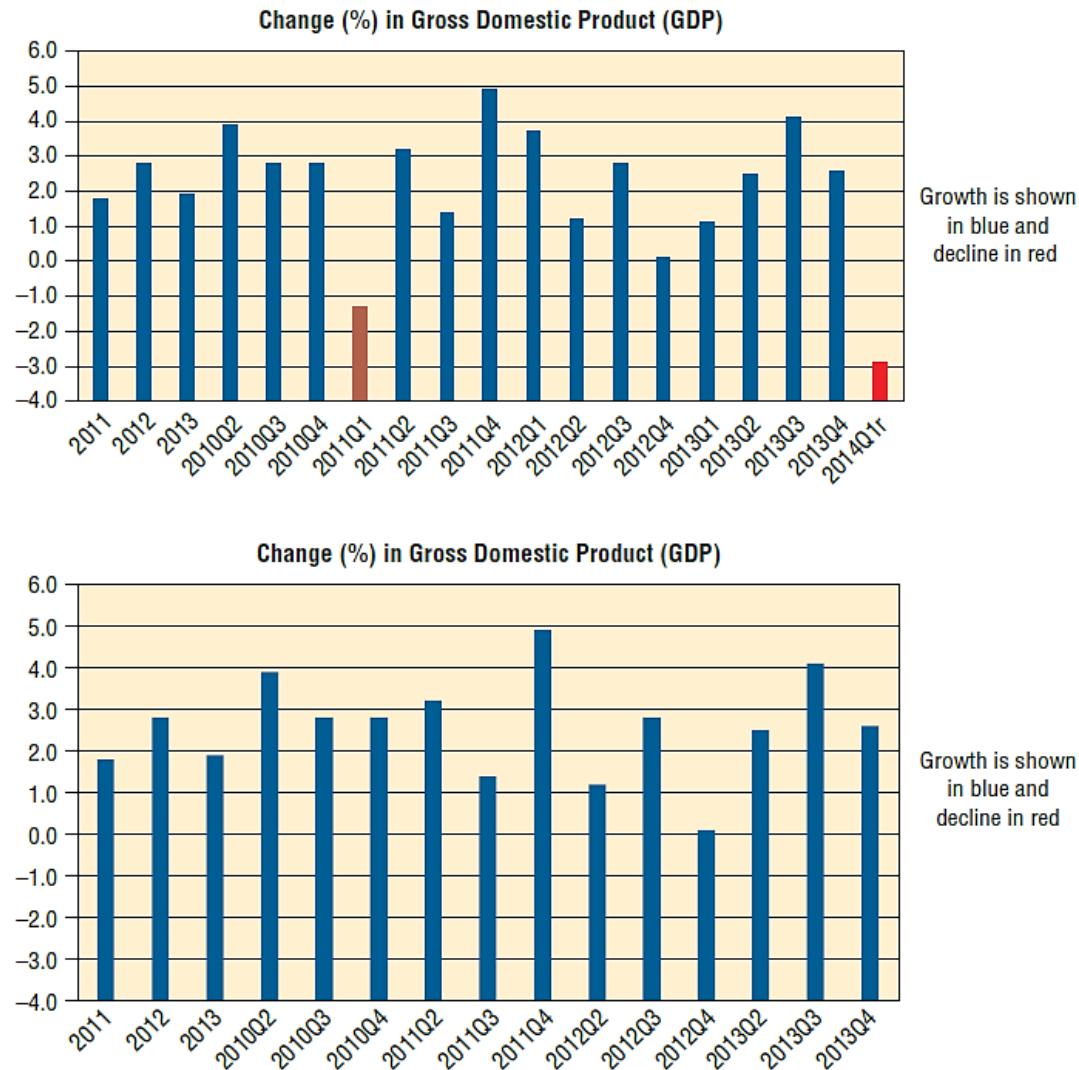
Row Headings

Notes including sources

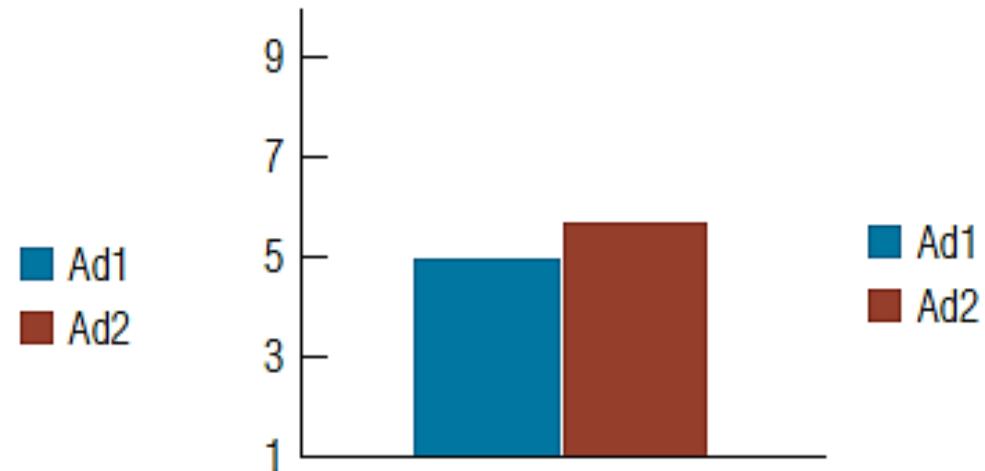
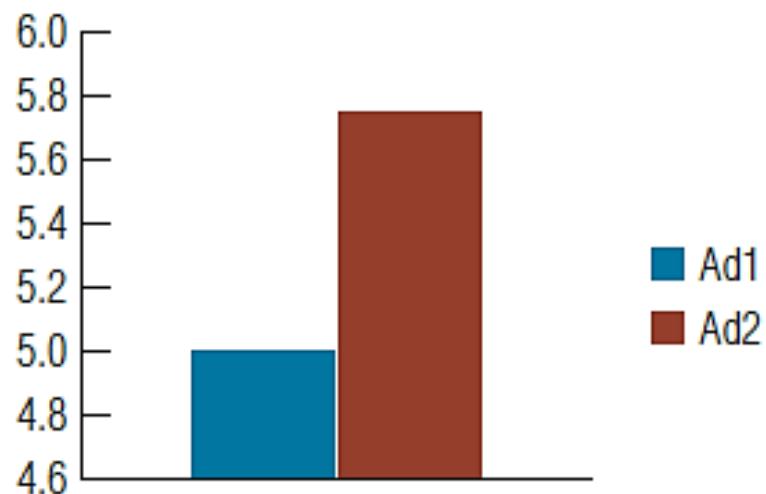
# Using Charts Effectively

- Each chart should include:
  - Figure number
  - Title
  - Explanatory legends
  - Source and footnotes
- Charts are subject to distortion, whether unintentional or deliberate
  - A particularly severe kind of distortion comes from treating unequal intervals as if they were equal

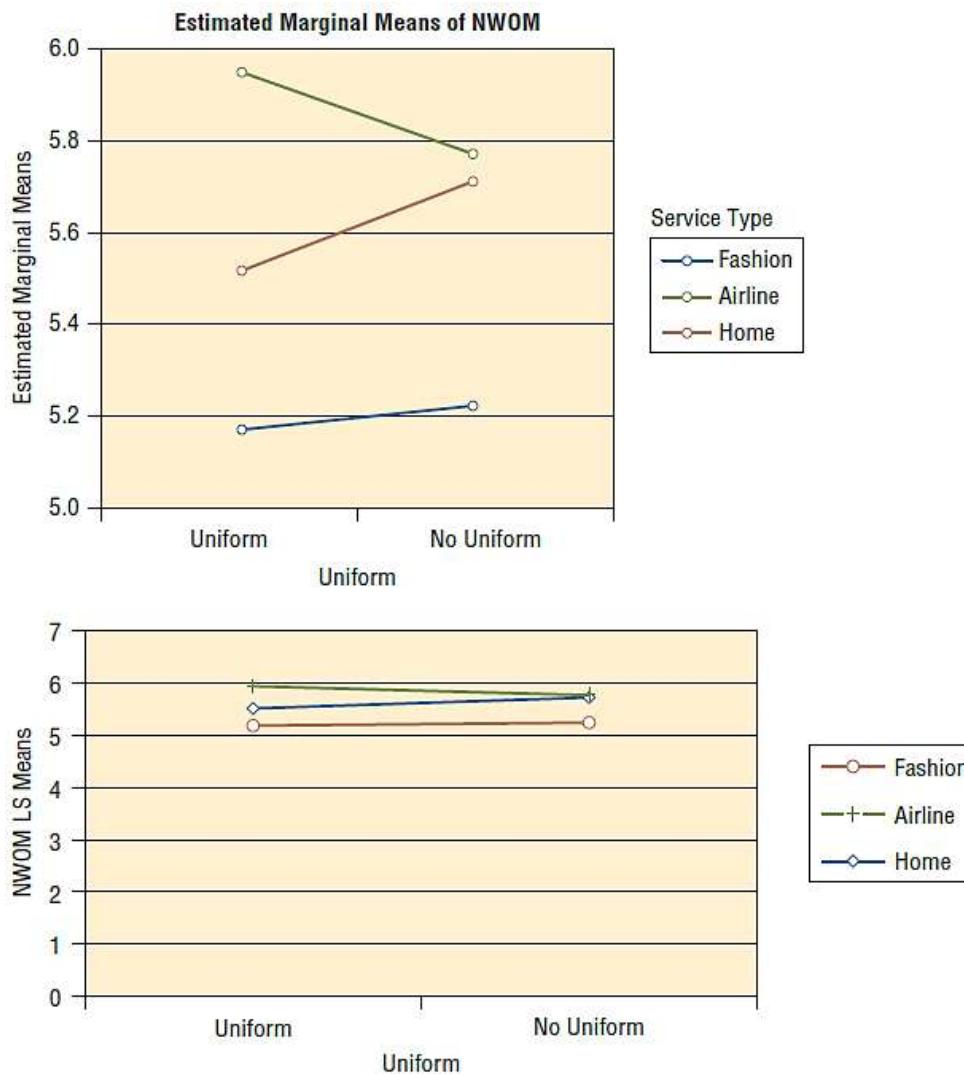
## EXHIBIT 16.3 Two Differing Depictions of the Same Data



## EXHIBIT 16.4 Axes Values Can Influence Interpretation



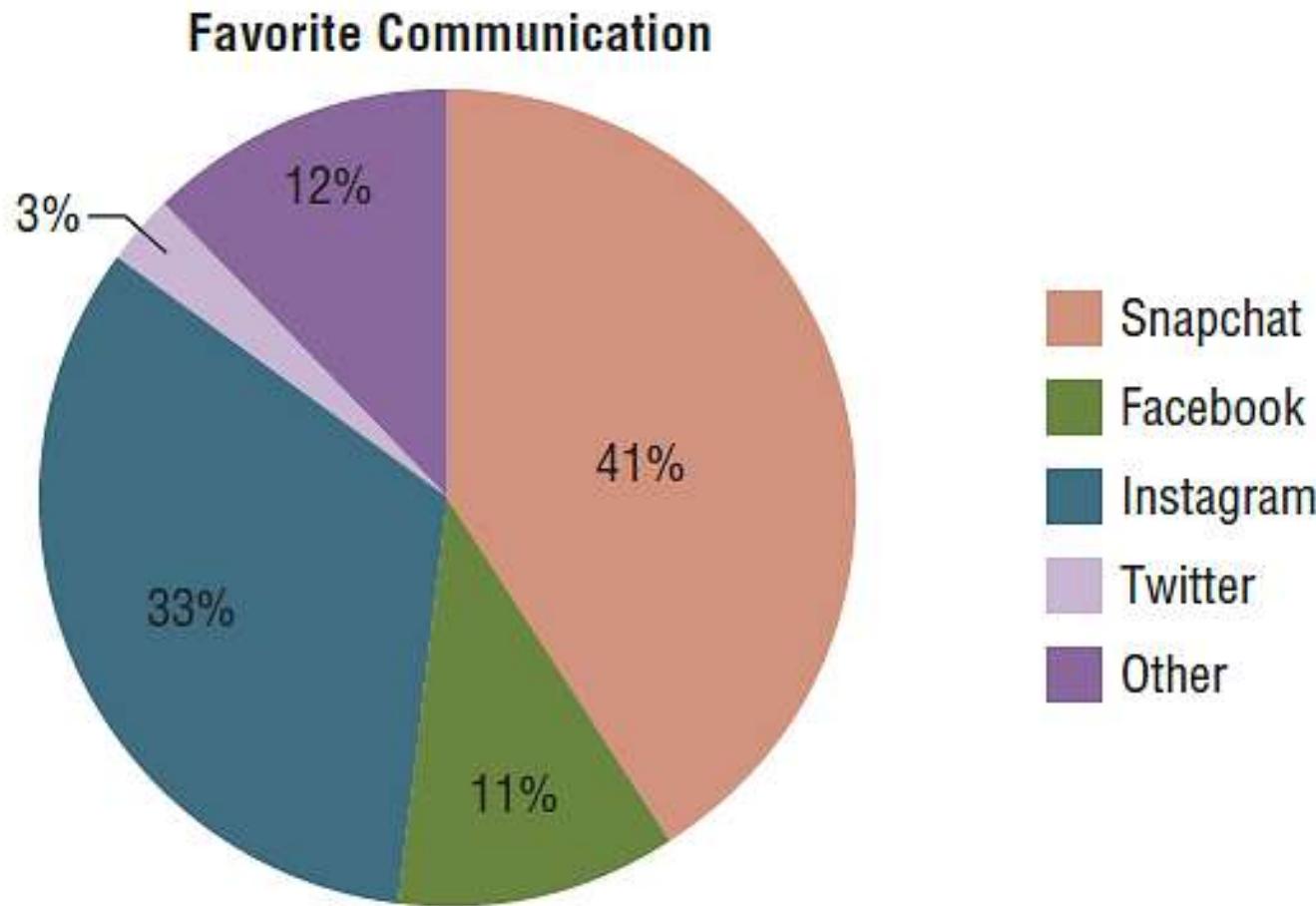
## EXHIBIT 16.5 A Small-Scale Range for the Y-Axis Can Mislead the User



# Pie Charts

- One of the most useful types of charts
- Shows the composition of some total quantity at a particular time
- Each angle, or “slice,” is proportional to its percentage of the whole and should be labeled with its description and percentage
- The writer should not try to include too many slices—about six slices is a typical maximum

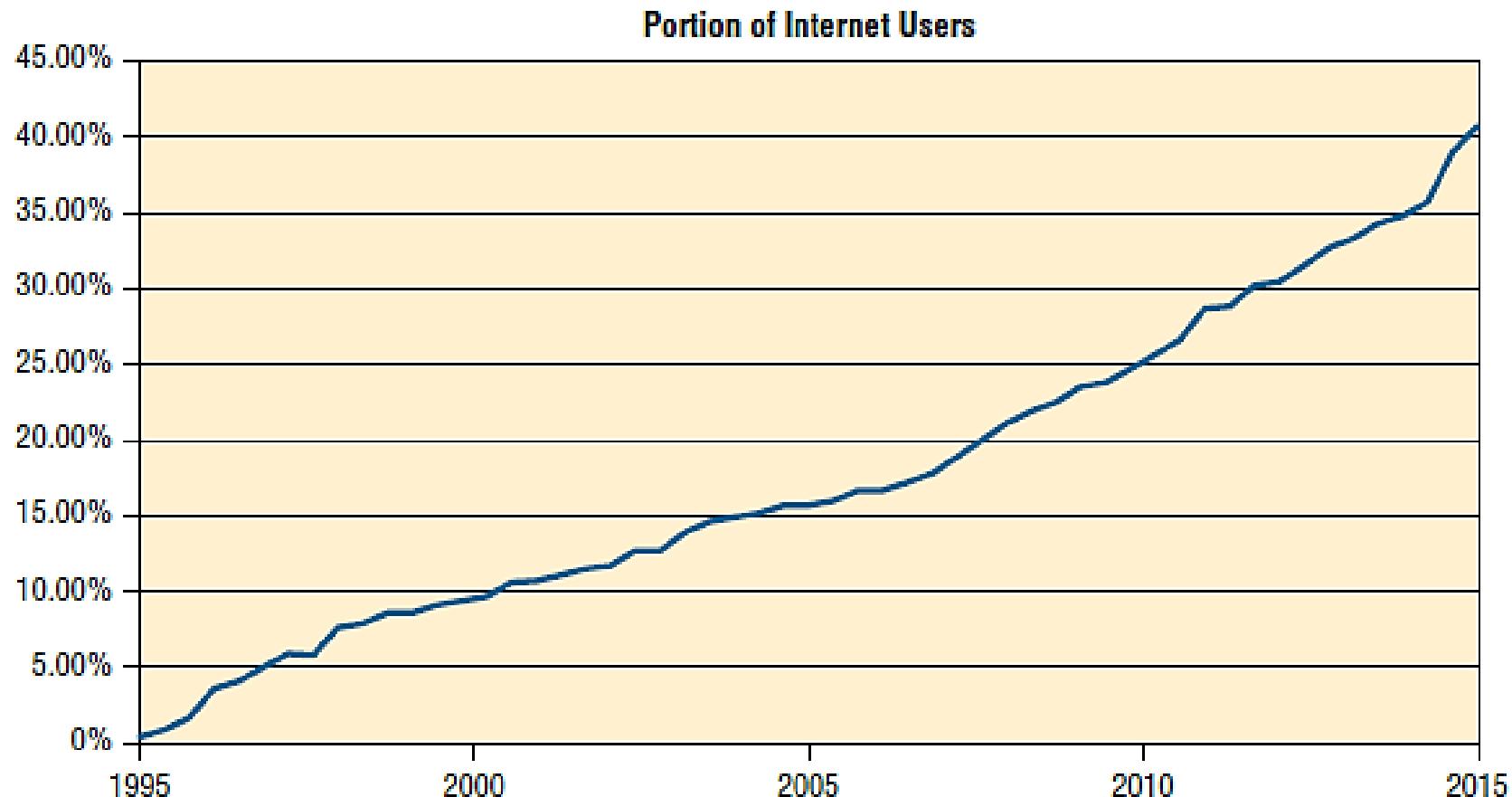
EXHIBIT 16.6 A Pie Chart Depicting a Sample of Tenth Graders' Choice to a Question Asking Their Favorite Means of Communication



# Line Graphs

- Useful to show the relationship of one variable to another
  - The dependent variable is generally shown on the vertical axis and the independent variable on the horizontal axis
  - The most common independent variable for such charts is time, but it is not the only one

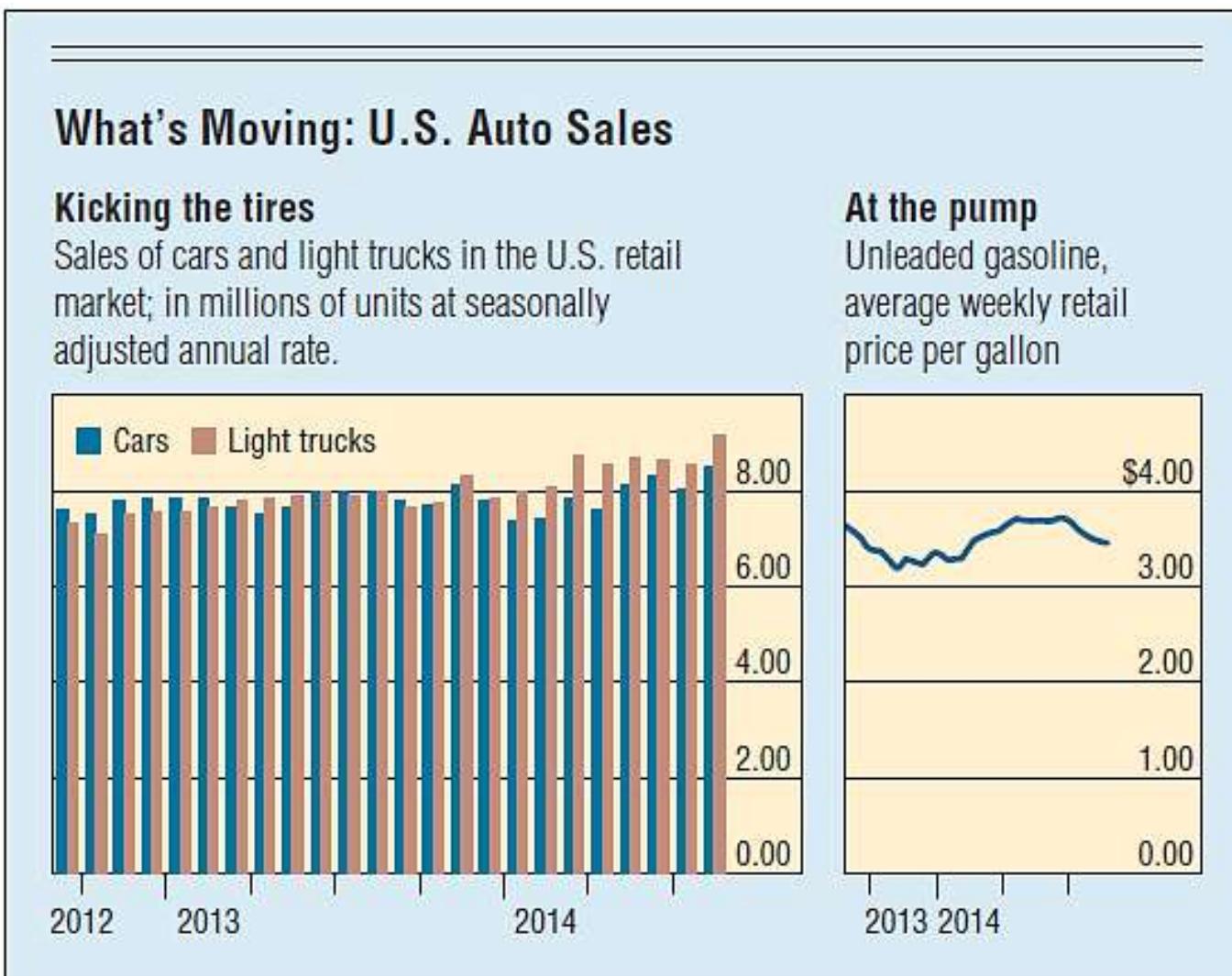
EXHIBIT 16.7 A Line Graph Depicting Percentage of Internet Users Worldwide by Year



# Bar Charts

- Show changes in the value of a dependent variable at discrete intervals of the independent variable
  - Multiple-bar chart – shows how multiple variables are related to the primary variables
    - ❖ Each bar or segment of the bar needs to be clearly identified with a different color or pattern
    - ❖ The writer should not use too many divisions or dependent variables
  - Too much detail obscures the essential advantage of charts, which is to make relationships easy to grasp

EXHIBIT 16.8 Graphic Combining a Multiple-Bar Chart and a Line Chart to Depict Trends in Car Versus Truck Sales in the United States



# Oral Presentation

- The purpose of an oral presentation is to highlight the most important findings of a research project and provide clients or line managers with an opportunity to ask questions
  - One simple rule—be as straightforward as possible
  - Prepare: the key to effective presentation
  - Begin at the end, meaning what a researcher wants the client to know when it has been completed
  - Select the three or four most important findings for emphasis and rely on the written report for full summary

# Oral Presentation (cont'd.)

- Organize around a standard format: “Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, and tell them what you just told them”
- Tips
  - Introduce yourself while displaying the title of the presentation
  - Open up your arms to embrace your audience
  - Drop your arms to your sides when not using them
  - Avoid quick and jerky gestures which make you appear nervous

# Reports on the Internet and Follow-Up

- One easy way to share data is to have executive summaries and reports on a company intranet
- A company can use information technology on the Internet to:
  - Design questionnaires
  - Administer surveys
  - Analyze data
  - Share the results in a presentation-ready format

# Reports on the Internet and Follow-Up (cont'd.)

- Real-time data capture allows for beginning-to-end reporting
  - A number of companies offer fully Web-based research management systems
- Self-contained presentations
  - Make sure the title page indicates who did the research and for whom it was done
  - Keep in mind that viewers may use all sorts of media devices to view the presentation
  - Limit the number of words on a slide

# Self-Contained Presentations (cont'd.)

- Annotate any potentially complex material
- Use self-advancing slides but always include an easy way for the user to move forward, stop, or repeat the presentation
- Include links to any technical appendices that support the work.
- On the last slide, provide clear and unambiguous contact information for easy follow-up

# Follow-Up Reports

- The research follow-up is a recontacting of decision makers and/or clients after they have had a chance to read over the report
  - Purpose is to determine whether the researchers need to provide additional information or clarify issues of concern to management
- Can help marketing researchers ensure the satisfaction of their customers, marketing managers