

WRITING BUSINESS REPORT

Rezwanul Huque Khan, PhD
Professor
IBA, University of Dhaka

What is a Report

A document that organizes information on a **specific topic**, for a **particular audience**, and with a **clear purpose**

An *orderly and objective* communication of *factual information*

Always written for a "client" within or outside the organisation

Know your 'audience' and 'your objective'. Your report has to highlight those aspects that will induce action from your 'audience'. Bridges the gap in knowldegas

What Type of Report Do You Write

Feasibility Report

Baseline report

Progress Report

Annual Report

Impact assessment report

Financial report

Sales Report

Two Main Categories of Reports

1. Informational report: informs and presents details of events, activities, or situations without analysis

How have NGOs contributed to the flood victims in Feni in 2024?

What was the role of BRAC to combat COVID attack in Bangladesh?

2. Analytical report: presents information with a comprehensive analysis to solve problems, evaluate alternatives, or to make recommendations.

Where to build the new factory for Aarong, Assessing Impact of an Intervention, Where to focus: Health or Education?

So, the purpose of a report is either to inform or to persuade

A well-written report...

Gathers relevant information

Evaluates and analyses that information

Organises material in a logical order with a clear structure

Makes appropriate conclusions that are supported by evidence and analysis

Makes practical recommendations where required

Stages in Report Writing Process

Stage One: Understanding the report brief

Stage Two: Gathering and selecting information

Stage Three: Analysing the material

Stage Four: Organising the material

Stage Five: Writing the report

Stage Six: Reviewing and redrafting

Stage Seven: Presentation

Elements of a Report

Three main categories of elements:

1. Front Matter/ Prefatory Parts: gives the report a formal appearance
2. Body/ Report Proper: presents and analyzes information gathered
3. Back Matter/ Appended Parts: anything that supports the report.

Front Matter

Title Fly

Title Page

Letter of Transmittal

Acknowledgement (use formal wording)

Table of Contents (not needed if report is less than 20 pages)

List of Illustrations (if a lot of illustrations)

Executive Summary

Body

Introduction

Review of the Literature

Methodology

Analysis

Findings & Discussions

Summary or Conclusions

Recommendations

References

Back Matter

Appendices

Bibliography

Report Structure

Length and formality determine report structure:

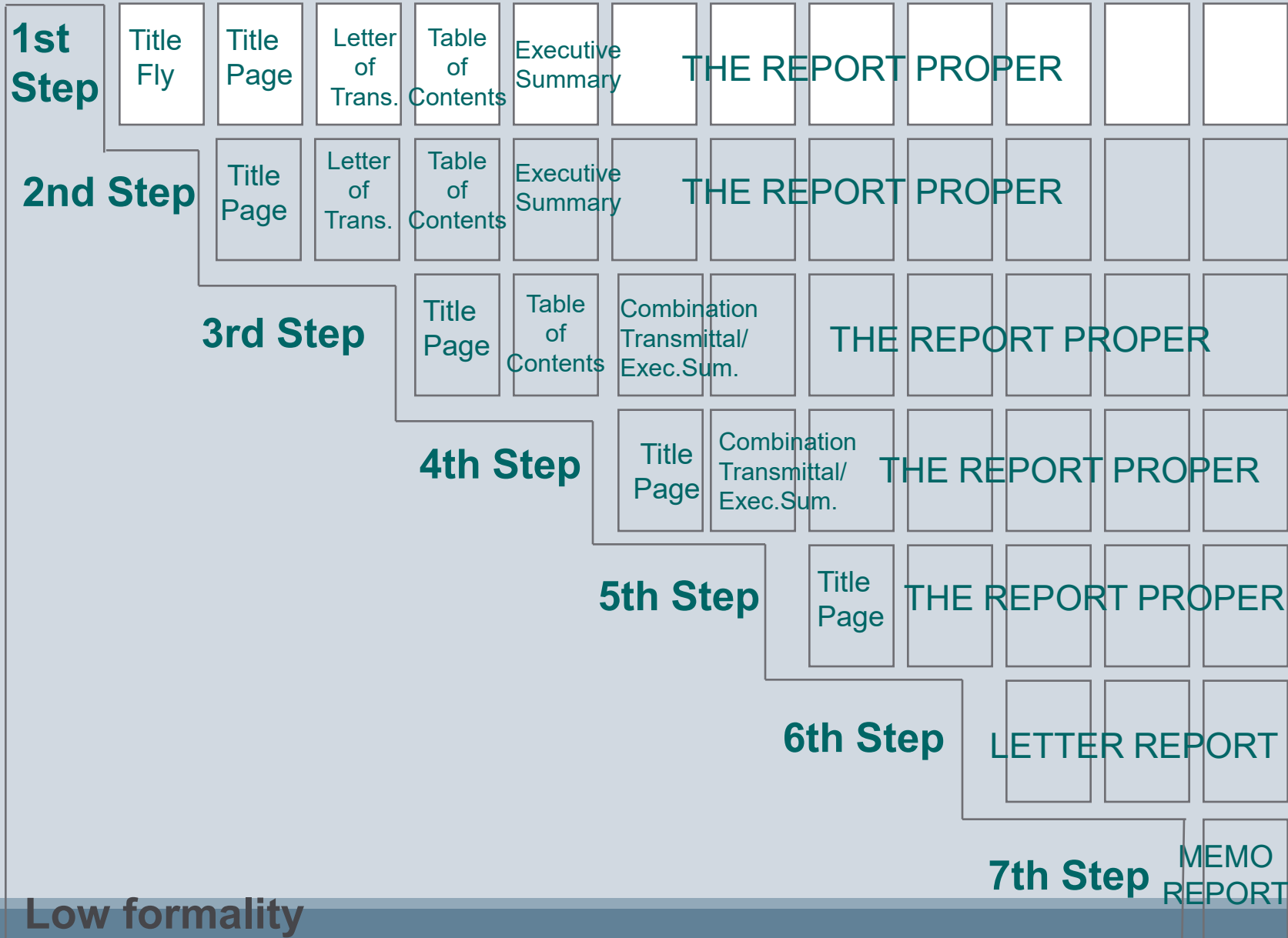
Long report contains different categories of report parts

Short report (usually between 10 and 20 pages or less) has title page and report text

For short problems of greater informality- *Letter report, memo report*

Progression of Change in Report Makeup

High formality



Characteristics of Short Reports

Consist of Title Page and report text

Usually used for routine activities/events

Predominance of direct order (begin with the Conclusion)

More likely to use personal writing styles (*I, we, and you* than only the third person)

Less need for a structured coherence plan

Often based on prototypes or make use of printed forms.

Formal Report Components

Title fly

- Contains only report title
 - Construct titles to make them describe the report precisely
 - Should cover 5 Ws: who, what, where, when and why. Sometimes how may be important
 - For example: you want to analyze the online promotional campaign by Aarong in 2023
 - Who: Aarong ; What: Promotional Campaign
 - Where: on the web; When: 2023
 - Why: Implied ; How : Not essential
 - **Title: Analyzing Aarong's Online Promotional Campaigns in 2023**
 - **Title Size ??**

Analyzing Aarong's Online Promotional Campaigns in 2023

Formal Report Components

Title page

- Balance the following lines:
 - Title of the report
 - Receiver's name, title, and organization
 - Author's name, title, and organization
 - Date submitted

Analyzing Aarong's Online Promotional Campaigns in 2023

(10-14 spaces)

Prepared for

(10-14 spaces)

Prepared by

(4-10 spaces)

Date of report submission

Formal Report Components

Letter or memo of transmittal

- Announce the topic and explain who authorized it.
- Briefly describe the project and preview the conclusions – if the reader is supportive.
- Close by expressing appreciation for the assignment, suggesting follow-up actions, acknowledging the help of others, and offering to answer questions.

Letter of Transmittal

MIDWESTERN RESEARCH, INC.

1732 Midday Avenue
Chicago, IL 60607
Telephone: 312.481.2919

April 13, 2024

Mr. W. Norman W. Bigbee
Vice President in Charge of Sales
Allied Distributors, Inc.
3131 Speedall Street
Akron, Ohio 44302

Dear Mr. Bigbee:

Here is the report on the online promotional campaigns by Aarong in 2023 you asked me to compare last January 3.

To help you in measuring the effectiveness online campaigns in 2024, I gathered what I believe to be the most complete information available. Much of the operating information comes from your own records. The remaining data are the findings of consumer research. The findings suggest

I sincerely hope, Mr. Bigbee, that my analyses will help you in making the correct decision in future. I truly appreciate this assignment. And should you need any assistance in interpreting my analyses, please call on me.

Sincerely,

George W. Franklin

George W. Franklin
Associate Director

Formal Report Components

Table of contents

- Show the beginning page number where each report heading appears in the report.
- Connect page numbers and headings with dots.

Formal Report Components

List of illustrations

- Include a list of tables, illustrations, or figures.
- Place the list on the same page as the table of contents if possible.

Table of Contents

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LIST OF TABLES AND CHARTS

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CHARTS

1. Estimated Total Operating Cost.....	6
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Formal Report Components (Executive Summary)

The single most important part of a business document or report

A miniature report that says as much as possible in the fewest words

Summarises lengthy reports; outlines key ideas, conclusions, and arguments

Designed to be read alone without the accompanying report

General rule of thumb: should be about 5% (or up to 10% in some cases) as long as the primary document

Must be written in the same order as the longer document

Should be written last.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The recommendation of this study is that Gamma is the best buy for Allied Distributors, Inc.

Authorized by Mr. Norman W. Bigbee, Vice President, on January 3, 2005, this report is submitted on April 13, 2005. This study gives Allied Distributors an insight into the problem of replacing the approximately 50 two-year-old subcompact cars in its present sales fleet. The basis for this recommendation is an analysis of cost, safety, and construction factors of four models of subcompact cars (Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Delta).

The four cars do not show much difference in ownership cost (initial cost less trade-in allowance after two years). On a per-car basis, Beta costs least for a two-year period--\$3,216. Compared with costs for the other cars, Beta is \$370 under Gamma, \$588 under Alpha, and \$634 under Delta. For the entire sales fleet, these differences become more significant. A purchase of 50 Betas would save \$18,500 over Gamma, \$29,400 over Alpha, and \$31,700 over Delta.

Operation costs would favor Gamma. Cost per mile for this car is \$0.13970, as compared with \$0.14558 for Alpha, \$0.14785 for Delta, and \$0.15184 for Beta. The totals of all costs for the 50-car fleet over the two-year period show Gamma to be least costly at \$385,094. In second place is Alpha, with a cost of \$400,208. Third is Delta with \$406,560, and fourth is Beta with a cost of \$417,532.

On the qualities that pertain to driving safety, Gamma is again superior to the other cars. It has the best brakes and is tied with Alpha for the best weight distribution. It is second in acceleration and is again tied with Alpha for the number of standard safety devices. Alpha is second overall in this category, having the second best brakes of the group. Beta is last because of its poor acceleration and poor brakes.

Construction features and handling abilities place Gamma all by itself. It scores higher than any other car in every category. Alpha and Delta are tied for second place. Again Beta is last, having poor steering and handling qualities.

Report Proper/Body

Introduction Checklist

Explain the problem motivating the report

(Background to your research-Describe the Problem's background referring to the literature--what is already known about your topic, and if there are any gaps)

State the objective and purpose

Sources and methods of collecting information

Report preview

State the objectives in one of three ways.

- ① **Infinitive phrase:**
"To identify the reasons of high child mortality rate in Chittagong"
- ② **Question:**
"What are the reasons of high child mortality rate in Chittagong ?"
- ③ **Declarative statement:**
"BRAC wants to know the reasons of high child mortality rate in Chittagong "

Preparing Formal Reports

- Analyze the report problem and purpose

- **Develop a problem question**

- We do not know the reasons of high child mortality rate in Chittagong*

- **Objective**

- To investigate the reasons of high child mortality rate in Chittagong*

- **Purpose**

- To offer recommendations to decrease the child mortality*

Literature Review

Review the secondary sources to understand the current situation or existing knowledge available (child mortality, reasons in other countries or regions, compare Chittagong and other areas of Bangladesh)

Methodology

Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed Method

Data collection technique

Sample size and rationale

Sample selection process and where

Analysis process

Scope—what is and is not covered

Limitations

Findings and Discussions

- ✓ Analyze, Interpret and Discuss the research findings or proposed solution to the problem.
- ✓ Arrange the findings in logical segments that follow your outline.
- ✓ Use clear, descriptive headings.

Interpret the Data

Advice for avoiding human error

Report the facts as they are.

Do not think that conclusions are always necessary.

Do not interpret lack of evidence as proof to the contrary.

Be sure your data is comparable.

Be sure the data are reliable and representative.

Make only those claims that your evidence can support.

Give attention to all important facts.

Ending of the Report

The ending of the report achieves the report goal.

- ✓ Use a *Summary* if the goal is to review information.
- ✓ Use a *Conclusion* if the goal is to reach an answer.
- ✓ Use a *Recommendation* if the goal is to determine a desirable action.

Ending Summary

Part of report text

Not the same as Executive Summary

A summary of major findings that reviews report highlights only

Contains no new information

Conclusions

Answer to the objective/problem

Follows from the findings and analyses.

Recommendations

Contains action items that would solve or reduce the problem

Often combined with Conclusions if both sections are short.

Types of Outline—Basis for Table of Contents

Alphanumeric Outline

Decimal Outline

Alphanumeric Outline

Roman numerals—I II III

Capitalized letters—A B C

Arabic numerals—1 2 3

Lowercase letters—a b c

Further subdivision: Arabic numerals inside parentheses (1) (2) (3),
and then lowercase letters inside parentheses (a) (b) (c)

Decimal System

Clearly shows how every level of the outline relates to the larger whole:

1.0 First-level heading

1.1 Second-level heading

1.2. Second-level heading

1.2.1 Third-level heading

1.2.2 Third-level heading

1.2.2.1 Fourth-level

2.0 First-level heading

2.1 Second-level heading

2.2 Second-level heading

Etc.

Wording of Outline

1. Topic heading:

- ✓ short constructions
- ✓ frequently consists of one or two words
- ✓ merely identifies the topic of discussion

3.0 Covid Patients

3.1 Dhaka

3.2 Chittagong

3.3 Rajshahi

4.0 Income

4.1 Dhaka

4.2 Rajshahi

4.3 Chittagong

Wording of Outline

2. Talking heading (concise, please!):

- ✓ identifies the subject matter covered
- ✓ summarizes the material covered

3.0 Growing number of patients signals second wave of Covid 19

3.1 Dhaka leads the nation

3.2 Chittagong has steadiest increase

3.3 Rajshahi maintains status quo

Wording of Outline

Equal-level headings to be parallel in structure
Variety of expression needed in headings
Subhead coming immediately after a heading—NO!

Point out any violations of grammatical parallelism in the following subheads of major division of a report.

- I. Sporting Good Shows Market Increase
- II. Modest Increase in Hardware Volume
- III. Automotive Parts Remains Unchanged
- IV. Plumbing Supplies Records Slight Decline

Variety of Expression

Replace monotonous repetitions of words in topic headings with a variety of words.

Not this:

- A. Dhaka Computer Sales
- B. Khulna Computer Sales
- C. Sylhet Computer Sales

But this:

- A. Dhaka Ranks First in Industry Sales
- B. Khulna Maintains Second Position
- C. Sylhet Posts Third Slot

Visual Aid

Includes tables and figures (graphs and images/diagrams)

Does not replace but supplements written material

Emphasizes key points by restating information

Relieves monotony

Encourages meaningful comparisons

Tables and Figures

Every graphic should be identified with the word "Table", "Figure", or other appropriate descriptor and have a title (as a phrase):

- ✓ titles of tables appear above the tabular display
- ✓ titles of other types of graphics appear below it

Headings/titles to be repeated on second and subsequent pages when a table splits over two or more pages

Tables to be split at an appropriate place, e.g. just before a new subheading

Tables and Figures (contd.)

Each item to be numbered consecutively in order of appearance.

Two methods for numbering:

Sequentially throughout the report, e.g.:

1, 2, 3...

Chapter number first, then numbered sequentially within each chapter, e.g.:

Tables in Chapter 1: Table 1.1, Table 1.2, Table 1.3...

Figures in Chapter 10: Figure 10.1, Figure 10.2, Figure 10.3...

Report Pages

Abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols defined the first time they appear; abbreviation in additional uses

One-inch margins on all sides of report pages (extra on left for bindings)

12-point type size

Single-spacing in report body

Each chapter on a new page

Chapter title at the top of the page

Writing Styles

Objective and impersonal presentation of information

Maintain a consistent time viewpoint.

Use smooth transitions

Make clear if stating own ideas ("A possible solution would be to...")

Profession-specific jargon—to use or not to use

Brevity and conciseness: *KISS--Keep It Simple, Straightforward* and *ASAP—As Short As Possible*

Impersonal vs. Personal Styles (1 of 2)

Impersonal

The first week of the period was spent on vacation. Work now is continuing to complete the next annual report. A description of the new high-temperature technique is the item that has come under consideration.

Personal

During the first week of the period, I was on vacation. I now am writing a description of the new high-temperature technique for the next annual report.

Impersonal vs. Personal Styles (2 of 2)

Impersonal

The current period has been devoted to becoming familiar with the new equipment.

Personal

I have spent the current period in becoming familiar with the new equipment.

Maintain Logic and Consistency in Time Viewpoint (1 of 4)

Avoid Illogical Time Shifts

Almost 37 percent of the merchants interviewed favored the Wilson plan. Only 14 percent of them prefer the Borden plan.

Maintain Logic and Consistency in Time Viewpoint (2 of 4)

Consistent Past

Since Dixie Cola was produced and distributed in the South, there was little difficulty in establishing its identity in that region.

Strong markets were designated as those that required little or no logical adaptation of commercials. Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama fell in that category.

Maintain Logic and Consistency in Time Viewpoint (3 of 4)

Consistent Present

Since Dixie Cola is produced and distributed in the south, there is little difficulty in establishing its identity in that region.

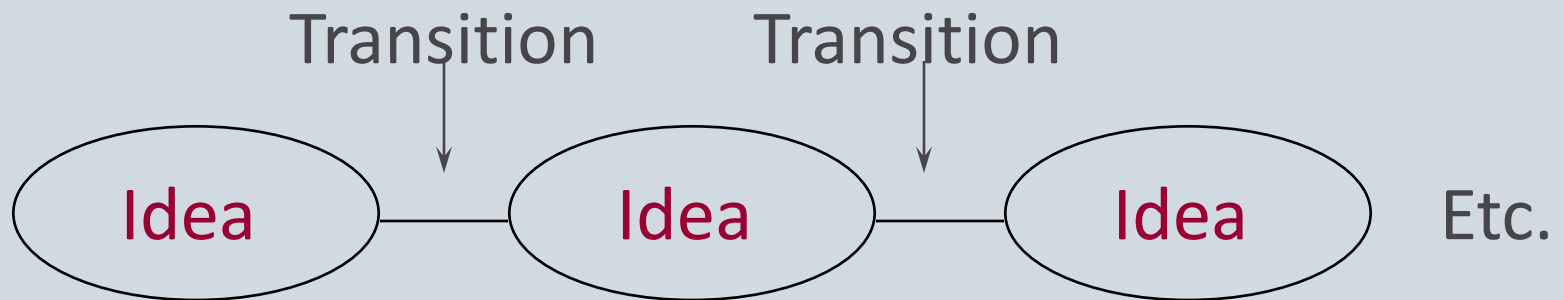
Strong markets are designated as those that require little or no local adaptation of commercials. Mississippi, Louisiana, and Alabama fall in that category.

Maintain Logic and Consistency in Time Viewpoint (4 of 4)

Logical Shifts are All Right

Of the merchants interviewed, 54 percent feel that such legislation is needed. Only 33 percent held this position a scant three years ago. Current indications are that the number favoring the bill will be much greater within another three years.

Transitions are Bridges for Moving the Reader Through Your Report



Use of Transition Words to Relate Paragraphs

End of paragraph . . . which makes these visuals among the *simplest* to construct.

Beginning of next paragraph Even though the line graphs are *simple*, *three* errors commonly are made in constructing them. *One* is the common violation of zero origin. The Y scale (vertical axis) must . . .

Beginning of next paragraph *Second* is the error of representing both X and Y scales on the grid by unequal distances. Any deviation from . . .

Beginning of next paragraph A *third* error concerns the determination of proportions of the . . .

End of paragraph . . . clearly is the most *economical* to operate.

Beginning of next paragraph In spite of its *economy*, the Xerox copier presents a major disadvantage. It has the highest breakdown record of the machines tested. In fact, over the past seven months. . .

Transition Though Word Connection (1 of 2)

Wormy oranges dumped from a passing ship floated ashore in Texas. **Consequently**, another battle had to be waged against the Mediterranean fruit fly.

Transitional elements are essential to understanding. **They** are the mortar that hold bricks of thought together.

Before buying plants, be sure you know which varieties are adapted to your area. **Adapted varieties** usually are sold by local nurseries.

Transition Though Word Connection (2 of 2)

A knowledge of your subject, a familiarity with words, and a compassion for your reader--**all** are essential to clear exposition.

In early spring, prepare the soil. **After the soil warms**, drill the seed at a rate of ten pounds per acre.

REFERENCING YOUR SOURCES

Appendices

Headings: Alphabetical (Appendix A) or numerical (Appendix 1)

Order: the order they appear at the back of report is determined by the order they are mentioned in the report body

Separate Title Page for each Appendix

Remember to list Appendices in Table of Contents page!

Editing

Before editing let your draft rest at least for few hours

Identify FOWLs (frequently occurring writing lapses)-

- Content lapses (35th July)
- Formatting lapses (inconsistencies)
- Grammatical lapses (parallelism)
- Mechanical lapses (hope you are dying well.)

THANK
YOU!