

Business reports

Reports describe, analyse, and investigate a situation for a particular audience. They have a formal structure and common sub-sections.

Business reports are a type of assignment in which you analyse a situation or problem (either a real situation or a case study) and apply business theories to produce a range of suggestions for improvement.

Business reports are typically assigned to enable you to:

- Examine available and potential solutions to a problem, situation, or issue.
- Apply business and management theory to a practical situation.
- Demonstrate your analytical, reasoning, and evaluation skills in identifying and weighing-up possible solutions and outcomes.
- Reach conclusions about a problem or issue.
- Provide recommendations for future action.
- Show concise and clear communication skills.

Remember that with business reports, typically, there is no single correct answer but several solutions, each with their own costs and benefits to an organisation. It is these costs and benefits which you need to identify and weigh up in your report.

Further, when writing the report, you need to consider the **audience** you are writing for: is it the CEO or will the report be available to all staff concerned? It is vital that you ensure an appropriate level of formality, sensitivity, fairness, and objectivity. Also, be mindful of the audience when writing recommendations. For example, your manager may not be able to influence company policies.

General format of a business report

Check your assignment instructions regarding which sections you need in your report. Also determine whether you are writing an inductive or deductive report (see page 3).

- 1 Letter or memo to the client
- 2 Title Page
- 3 Executive Summary
- 4 Table of Contents (if required by your lecturer)
- 5 Introduction
- 6 Discussion
- 7 Conclusions
- 8 Recommendations
- 8 References
- 10 Appendices (if required)

There are conventions relating to what goes into each section. The purpose of these conventions is to save the reader's time. If the reader just wants to know what your key findings are, they can turn immediately to the Executive Summary or the Conclusions section.