

## Writing an Effective Report

A typical business report includes the following headings:

- I Executive/management summary
- II Introduction (including objectives)
- III Background to the problem
- IV Analysis (divided into relevant sections)
- V Conclusions and recommendations
- VI Bibliography/references
- VII Appendices (supporting data and facts)

- The executive summary should provide a succinct, one- or two-page account of the entire report. It should explain the background to the case, discuss the key issues and themes, report on the analysis and list the recommendations.
- The report should be as user-friendly as possible, with page numbers, a table of contents, numbered sections and sub-headings. References should be sourced within the main body of the report and then listed in full in the bibliography. Diagrams and tables should also be properly labelled and referenced.
- The writing style should be as clear as possible, free of long sentences and jargon. If jargon is unavoidable, a glossary should explain any terms not in common usage.
- Arguments should be supported with appropriate sources (references, statistics, quotes, examples, comparisons, etc.) as available to add credibility to the discussion.
- Data from the case should be used with care and, if possible, interpreted; this may involve extrapolating trends or making predictions about the likely outcome of certain activities. Only relevant data should be included.
- Any relevant material that would clutter the main body of the document should be placed in appendices. Each appendix should be referred to within the main body of the report and listed in the table of contents.