Sample Report:

Format, Layout, and Style

Document Name: Sample Report
Document Number: ADM-P282
Revision #1   NOTE: Revisions to this document can be made following procedures outlined in Document #ADM-P014 – Document Control Policy and Procedures

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Introduction

As you undertake courses at Columbia, you will be required to write various reports for different facilitators. Some students have had experience in report writing, but many have not. And frankly, if you have never written a report, the first one can be pretty scary.

This sample report, or template, was developed so you have a reference you can use in your work at Columbia College. It is hoped that this is straightforward and easy to use.

The Nature of Reports

Why Bother?

A report is an opportunity to demonstrate to your facilitator your thorough understanding of certain ideas and concepts. In the report you not only need to demonstrate your knowledge of specific ideas, but how to apply them in business.

Although report writing at Columbia College is part of your course requirements; it should be noted that businesses highly value people who can clearly express their ideas in writing.

Orderly

Reports have order to them which in general should be followed for understandability by the reader. It is a bit like expecting to find the wheel of a car on the left hand side of the vehicle. The order presented in this particular report is adequate for any report you are required to do at Columbia College. However, please know that your Business Communication text has more information on report order.

Information Flow

The information presented in your report should be logical and flow from one topic to the other. In general, information presented later should build on information presented earlier. For instance, in this report the conclusion is presented at the last, not at the beginning.

Uses of Titles

In general titles and sub-titles are a bit like street signs designed to help the reader find their way through the documents. Their use facilitates the reading process.

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<u>Use of Formatting</u>

"Formatting" is the use of **bold**, <u>underlining</u>, *italics* and white space.

(White space)

to make readability easier. **Bold**, <u>underlining</u>, and *italics* all make text stand out to the reader's eyes. White space gives the eyes a break, allowing the eyes to move easily from one paragraph to the other.

Font refers to the type you use. Confusing? You have a choice of typewriter scripts, some of which are much easier on the eye. For instance, Palatino is considered to be easier to read, because the little curvy things on the type give the reader's eyes clues, which result in greater readability. This report is written in Helvetica, mostly because the writer likes the clean look of the font.

This report employs relatively simple formatting – it uses bold for header titles, and underlining normal text for sub-titles. The formatting exampled in this report is probably sufficient for your needs. However, if you have a real zinger of a report, your Business Communication text has the formal rules for formatting complex documents.

<u>Appendices, Figures and Tables</u>

These are documents that usually are too complicated to include in the body of your report, but they contain valuable information, so you want to put them somewhere. The answer is at the back, in the order they appear in your document. Your report should refer to the information in the attachment, when it is appropriate to do so.

An *Appendix* is an attachment of supporting documentation. For instance, it can be supporting research or an article. For this sample report, I included the names of the Facilitators who support the use of this Sample report, and this information can be referenced in Appendix 1.

A *Figure* is usually a graph or picture. A nonsensical figure is displayed in Figure 1.

A *Table* is usually a supporting "table" of numbers. A sample table from your textbook is shown in Table 1.

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Conclusion

This is a sample report, written somewhat humorously, so you enjoy what you read. But, there is valuable information contained within it, which can be used to make the first report you write a little less agonizing.

Your comments regarding the improvements of this report are greatly appreciated, and should be directed to Ann Conquergood.

Recommendations (optional)

1.   A section titled recommendation may or may not be presented after the conclusion. It depends on the type of report and the intent of the writer.

2.   Use the information contained in the report, especially with regard to information flow and formatting. It will help your report mark significantly!

3.   All of the information contained in this report is contained in your Business Communication textbook "Business Communication – Strategies and Skills". Be sure to refer to it when you are stuck!

4.   Good luck!

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Bibliography

1. Huseman, Richard et al. Business Communication "Strategies and Skills" 4th Canadian Edition, Harcourt Brace & Company. Canada, 1996.

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<u>List of Facilitators Who Highly Recommend The Use of This Report Framework</u>

Betty Smith

George Smith

Ralph Smith

Rosa Smith

Zena Smith

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Figure 1

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Table 1

1990 – 1993 Turnover Rate for Microchip and Some of Its Competitors

Turnover Rate

Company	1990	1991	1992	1993
Microchip	13%	17%	18%	21%
Burns	18	2	16	12
Dominion	15	14	17	13

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