IIT ROORKEE

NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE

EFFECTIVE WRITING

Lecture 17: Report Writing

BINOD MISHRA

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



Origin and Definition

- **Latin "Reporto"**
- A communication from someone who has information to someone who wants to use that information.

---C.A. Brown

A report is a formal communication written for a specific purpose; it includes a description of procedures followed for collection and analysis of data, their significance, the conclusions drawn from them and recommendations, if required.

How are Reports different from other forms of Writing?

❑ Reports

- ✓ Objective
- ✓ Well defined audience
- ✓ Based on facts and investigation
- ✓ Highly structured
- ✓ Language to be concise and concrete
- ✓ Can be presented orally
- ✓ Can be written on demand

❑ Other writings

- ✓ Subjective
- ✓ Varied audience
- ✓ Self-expression, imagination
- ✓ Scope for autonomy
- ✓ Flexible language
- ✓ Confined to writing
- ✓ Can be choice based

Importance

- Updates progress and helps in planning
- Evaluates men & materials
- Reveals gaps in thinking
- Creates Awareness
- Spreads information
- Helps in Decision making
- Establishes harmony

An Observation

A report is a professional's only tangible product. It presents his investigation, his testing and experimentation. If his efforts are to count in the judgement of his superiors, he must describe clearly what he has done. He must show the significance of his work. And often the engineer's written report is his only contact with the management.

Typical Business Reports

- Periodic reports
  - To monitor operations

- Situational reports
  -- to describe non recurring activities, such as trips/conference reports.

- Investigative/informative reports
  -- to examine situations or problems and supply facts.

Contd.

- Compliance Report
  - Complies with laws and regulations
- Recommendation Report
  - Justifies purchases, new programme or changes
- Yardstick Report
  - To measure the alternatives and to establish consistent criteria
- Feasibility Report
  - to use analysis and examine the benefits and problems

Formal and Informal Reports

❑ Formal

- ❖ Should have all parts of structure.
- ❖ Content depends both on primary and secondary sources
- ❖ Visual aids
- ❖ May be long

❑ Informal

- ❖ No graphics
- ❖ Depends on primary sources
- ❖ Written in first person
- ❖ Usually short

Types of Reports

- Reports can be classified on the basis of formality, length and frequency.
- Reports can be divided into three categories:
  - Informative
  - Analytical
  - Routine

Informative Reports

Specification

- Confined to information.
- Restricted to aims and objectives.
- Required to provide information as it is.
- No analysis and recommendation.

Examples

Policy Statements

Readership Surveys

Sales Report

Credit Reports

Employee booklets

Committee Reports

Production Reports

Analytical Reports

Specification

- Ample scope for analysis
- Interpretation of data chiefly of investigation
- Use of illustrations
- Findings and recommendations
- Solution to a problem.
- Leads to decision making

Example

- Advertising
- Examination
- Accounting
- Statistical analysis
- Market surveys

Routine Reports

Specifications

- Written regularly but at fixed intervals
- Reports regular matters such as production, sales performance, inventory etc.
- Confined to fixed proforma
- Language least important

Examples

- Progress Report
- Inspection Report
- Confidential Report
- Laboratory Reports

Other Reports

- ❑ Management Reports
- ❑ Special Reports

- ✓ Management Reports are non-technical and it focuses on result, using journalistic language and liberal use of illustrations.
- ✓ Special Reports are written during crisis, using meticulous use of language to tide over a situation.

We are all apprentices in a craft where no one ever becomes a master.”
—Ernest Hemingway

Thank You