



**Multiple Writing Strategies for Hardcopy, and
For Creating Web-Based E-Books and Articles**

By David Alderoty © 2014

**Chapter 7) Business Writing, with Related
Correspondence, Reports, and Documentation**

Words 3244

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To Access Additional Information with Hyperlinks

After I complete a writing task, I select a number of websites from other authors, to provide additional information, alternative points of view, and to support the material I wrote. These websites contain articles, videos, and other useful material. The websites can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlinks, which are the **blue underlined words**, presented at the end of some of the headings and subheadings. If a link fails, use the blue underlined words as a search phrase, with www.Google.com or www.Bing.com

Business Writing, and Related Concepts

What is Business Writing

Business writing is comprised of the various types of writing used in organizations, offices, government agencies, and various types of businesses, for the purpose of correspondence, reports, and documentation. The above represents three categories of business writing, which I will discuss under separate headings in this chapter.

Business Correspondence, and Related Concepts

What are Business Correspondences?

Correspondences are e-mails, letters, faxes, and text messages, which are written to transmit information to one or more individuals. This can involve correspondence within the business, communication with suppliers and outside consultants, or letters, e-mails, or faxes to and from customers.

Writing Correspondence

The way a correspondence is written, can vary depending on its purpose, the information it contains, the relationship between the writer and the receiver. Some organizations have their own preferred writing style for letters, e-mails, and faxes. However, I am providing some general guidelines for this category of writing

in the following paragraph.

Correspondences should be written in simple language, in a polite and friendly style. Letters may be written in a more formal style than e-mails, especially if the writer is communicating with an individual of higher rank or status. Routine correspondence for coworkers can be written very informally. However, grammar errors, poor sentence structure, ambiguous wording, and slang language, **should** always be avoided. Business correspondence should be concise, and as short as feasible.

Three Ways of Shortening Your Correspondence

If your e-mails, letters, and faxes are lengthy, it can be reduced with the three techniques presented below.

- 1) Try to create simpler and shorter sentences. Remove unnecessary words and statements.

- 2) You can reduce the size of a correspondence by transmitting some or most of the information it contains, with one or more phone calls or face-to-face meetings.

- 3) Instead of sending one long correspondence, divide it into two or **more** letters or e-mails. This is feasible when you are dealing with a number of topics that can be transmitted in separate e-mails or letters.

When you cannot shorten your correspondence to one page

or less, it is best to place the most important information on the top, followed by progressively less important information. With this technique, the most important material will probably be read, even if part of your messages ignored because of its length.

To be certain that your important correspondence are read and understood, try to obtain feedback with a phone call or face-to-face meeting.

See the Following Websites From Other Authors for Additional Information, and Alternative Perspectives on Business Correspondence, and Related Concepts

[Video "Writing Routine Business Correspondence"](#)

[Video "How to Write a Business Letter"](#)

[Video "Business Correspondence"](#)

[Video "The Key Forms of Business Writing: Basic Letter"](#)

[Video "Effective Business Writing"](#)

["What Is a Business Correspondence?"](#)

["Sample Business Letters"](#)

["Business Correspondence: Overview"](#)

["BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE"](#)

Business Reports, and Related Concepts

What is the Purpose of a Business Report?

Business reports are generally used to assist in business related problems, goals, and for periodic assessments of various departments within an organization. Reports are used to obtain

funding for industrial projects, to present the findings of an investigation, and for feasibility studies. Reports are sometimes created to explain the need for specific expenditures to upper management, such as for new equipment, for outside consultants, and for additional employees. Reports are often created for stockholders that indicate profits, losses, and for production and sales goals.

Business reports are often required from supervisors, managers, and sometimes even by lower-level employees. Sometimes reports are required annually or semiannually to provide information on production, and sales.

A General Structure and Concept of a Report

I am using the phrase business report in a very general way, which includes grant proposals, requests for research funding, accident reports, feasibility studies, as well as the conventional reports created in the business environment. This is because most reports more or less fit into a general format, which I am presenting in the following paragraphs. However, this does not imply that all reports are identical. The structure of a report can vary depending on its purpose, its size, the readers, and the type of material it covers.

The general format of a report can be represented by **seven sections.** These sections, with some variations, are commonly included in most descriptions of a report. (For a typical example,

see the illustration at the website of [Unilearning Project, University of Wollongong](#).) Keep in mind, that simpler reports may not have, or need, all of the seven sections, and they may range from two to 15 pages. Some reports are highly complex, and may contain anywhere from 30 to over 300 pages. Reports of this nature might require more than seven sections.

The seven sections of a report are explained in the following paragraphs.

1) The title page, is the first section of the report, which should contain a **descriptive title** that illustrates the content, or purpose of the report. The author or sponsor of the report may also be important and placed on the title page. Simple reports may not need a title page, or even a descriptive title.

2) An executive summary is similar to an abstract, in an academic paper. It sums up the entire report, which ideally should be done in one page or less. When a report is simple, and only two or three pages, the executive summary might be unnecessary.

When a report is complex or technical, it may be advisable to write the executive summary in a simplify way, with non-technical language. This is necessary when the CEO or other individuals in upper management do not have a technical background.

3) A table of contents often follows the executive summary. If the report is short enough for most people to read

in its entirety, it might be best to avoid a table of contents, or to place it at the end of the report. However, if the report is too lengthy for most people to read in its entirety, a table of contents should be included, after the executive summary.

4) The introduction follows the table of contents, and it may range in length from a couple of sentences to several paragraphs. The introduction can start with background information, which leads into the main purpose of the report, such as a problem, a goal, or solution.

5) The body of the report covers the topic, goal, problem, or solution that was presented in the introduction. This includes related arguments and supporting evidence. With very simple reports, the introduction may lead directly into the body of the report, all on the same page.

6) The conclusion follows the body of the report, and it may contain recommendations for improvements or solutions to alleviate problems. Alternatively, the concluding paragraphs may sum up goals or solutions that were mentioned earlier in the report.

With simple reports, there may not be a separate section for the conclusion. When this is the case, the last paragraph of the body of the report is the conclusion.

7) Appendix is used to provide additional information about equipment, goals, problems, and arguments that were mentioned in the report. This information is not essential for an

understanding of the report, but it is provided for readers that want more details. In complex reports, there can be a number of appendices, for different categories of information.

Headings are necessary for most reports. When a report is complex or lengthy, it should have at least two or three levels of headings. Relatively simple reports may require only one heading level.

See the Following Websites From Other Authors for Additional Information, and Alternative Perspectives on Business Reports, and Related Concepts

["Business Reports"](#)

["Types of business reports"](#)

["How to Write a Business Report"](#)

["WRITING BUSINESS REPORTS"](#)

["The Structure of Business Reports"](#)

["Writing a report"](#)

["WRITING THE REPORT"](#)

["Writing reports"](#)

["Report Writing"](#)

["REPORT WRITING"](#)

["Handbook on Report Formats"](#)

[Video "Report Writing"](#)

[Video "Effective Business Report Writing..."](#)

[Video "How To Structure A Business Report"](#)

[Video "The Key Forms of Business Writing: Reports"](#)

[Video "How to Write a Business Report"](#)

Arguments and Reports

Two Argumentative Configurations for Reports

There are at least two ways of configuring the arguments in a report. The first I am calling Configuration-1, and it starts with the problem, and presents arguments that lead to a solution.

Configuration-2, starts with the solution, and presents arguments that support the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of a solution.

These configurations are explained in detail in under the following subheadings.

Report Configuration-1, Problem First, Followed by Arguments that Lead to a Solution

With configuration-1, a report starts with the problem, in the introduction. In the body of the report, more information about the problem might be provided. This is followed by a series of arguments, with supporting evidence that leads to a solution.

The solution is presented in the concluding section of the report.

The above is a traditional way of presenting problems, arguments, and solutions. Configuration-1 may be advantageous when a problem is complex, poorly understood or unknown to upper management. This is especially the case, if the report is the result of an investigation of a problem.

The disadvantage to Configuration-1 is the reader may not

be able to follow a long chain of reasoning that leads to the solution. Upper management may not have time available to read the entire report. As a result, they will not understand the arguments, and they may not read the proposed solution at the end of the report. In such a case, the proposed solution might not receive funding.

However, the above disadvantage can be reduced, if the report is short, and the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of the solution is explained in detail, in the body of the report. With this modification, the problem is still presented first.

Report Configuration-2, Solution First, followed by Arguments Supporting the Efficacy of a Solution

With configuration-2, the **solution** to a problem is presented in the introduction. In the body of the report, arguments and evidence are presented to support the efficacy, cost-effectiveness, and implementation of the solution. This includes a description of the problem, and related arguments that show how the proposed solution, will solve it.

With configuration-2, the report should be arranged so the most important arguments are presented first, followed by progressively less important arguments.

With configuration-2, even if upper management does **not** read the entire report, they will understand the solution, and the required expenditures. This will probably increase the chances of obtaining funding to implement the solution.

Configuration-2 is especially useful, when problems are simple, or can be easily explained. An example is production delays, caused by old equipment that frequently malfunctions. This configuration is also useful when complex problems are already well understood by upper management.

Configuration-2 might have some **disadvantages** when problems are complex, poorly understood, or unknown to upper management. This is especially the case if there are multiple difficulties causing a primary problem.

However, the above disadvantages can be reduced, if the problem and its cause are explained in detail in the body of the report. With this modification, the **solution** is still presented first, but additional details about the problem are provided.

A Detailed Example to Clarify the Above

Configuration-1 is essentially a commonsense way of presenting a problem and required solution. However, configuration-2 can be confusing, so I am presenting a detailed example, in the following paragraphs.

Let us assume that the solution is new computers for the engineering department. This may be stated in the introduction of the report as **The engineering department needs new computers.** This statement is followed by arguments and evidence that supports the purchase of new computers. These arguments indicate the existence of one or more problems, which

will be solved by the purchase of new computers. The most important arguments are presented first follow by progressively less important arguments, such as the following example.

The old computers are constantly crashing, and they cannot handle the software packages required by the engineering department. Each time a computer crashes, many hours of engineering work are lost. This is slowing production, and it is costing the company a substantial amount of money.

The constant difficulties with the computers are causing tension and conflict in the engineering department, and one employee already quit.

Following the above paragraphs, proof should be provided, such as signed statements from the engineers that their computers are crashing.

Providing simplified technical information that explains why the old computers are crashing might be also important, such as the following:

The computers are crashing because their processors are too slow, and they do not have adequate random access memory, for the software used in the engineering department. The newer computers now on the market can easily handle this software.

Arguments and evidence that indicate cost-effectiveness should be included, such as the following:

The new computers will pay for themselves in a few months, because they will increase the productivity of the engineering

*department. If new computers are **not** purchased, we will have to outsource engineering work, which will cost substantially more than buying new computers.*

Following the above paragraphs estimates of the financial losses that are resulting from the old computers can be presented. Estimates of long-term financial gains that will result from buying new computers can also be stated. This can also include the make and model of the computers that the engineers need to achieve the increase in productivity.

With the above format, if upper management reads the first two paragraphs of the report, they will understand the problem, and the solution. If they read another two or three paragraphs, they will understand the consequences of not funding the solution, which in this example is buying new computers for the engineering department.

Persuasive Reports, to Influence with Arguments

What Are Persuasive Reports?

Reports are sometimes created to influence with arguments and other information, which I am calling persuasive reports. Reports of this nature are usually making **requests** from funding agencies, upper management, or from potential investors. Some examples are reports written for grant proposals, research grants, and funding requests made on behalf of nonprofit organizations. Another example is reports created for obtaining

investors for a new invention or business.

Sometimes persuasive reports are written within a large corporation. For example, a report may be created by a department, addressed to upper management, requesting funding for expansion. Another example is a report created by an employee, (such as an engineer, or a scientist), addressed to upper management, requesting permission, and resources to work on their own project.

Before Writing a Persuasive Report, Estimate the Level of Reluctance of Your Target Audience

When writing a persuasive report, you should try to evaluate or estimate the level of reluctance of the potential readers, which are the decision-makers who will grant or reject your request. If you are faced with little or no reluctance, you can write a simple report that explains your request.

However, in most cases, there will be at least some reluctance to grant your request, and there might even be reluctance to read your report. When this is the case you should provide every argument, and detail that supports your request. The most important arguments should be presented first, followed by progressively less important arguments.

Obtain Information About the Agency and Readers

Before writing a persuasive report, obtain as much information as you can, about the target agency, and the potential readers of your report. In some cases, it might be feasible and appropriate,

to talk to agency officials and the potential readers of your report, before you start writing. This can also include sending correspondence explaining your request unofficially. The idea here is to determine if there are any reservations, in regard to your request. If there are, you can either modify your request, or address their reservations in additional correspondence or phone calls. It is best to resolve all reservations about your request, before you officially submit your report.

Ideally, all of the above can include developing a friendly acquaintanceship with officials and potential readers of your report.

Persuasive Truthful Information, Without Deception

When writing a persuasive report, you must provide truthful information. Do not use deception in your report. Deceptive statements can be created inadvertently, and you should proofread your report, to remove such statements. Sentence structures that might be deceptive can usually be modified to eliminate the problem. This can involve confusing statements about your qualifications, level of experience, and education.

See the Following Websites From Other Authors for Additional Information, and Alternative Perspectives on Persuasive Reports, to Influence with Arguments

["Grant Proposals \(or Give me the money!\)"](#)

["How to Write a Grant Proposal"](#)

["Writing a good grant proposal"](#)

Very good ["Proposal Writing Short Course"](#)

Very good ["Developing And Writing Grant Proposals"](#)

["Persuasive Writing"](#)

["How to Write a Persuasive Report"](#)

[YouTube search page with several good videos](#)

[Video "...Power of Persuasive Government Proposals"](#)

[Video "How to be innovative in your NIH Grant Proposal"](#)

[Video "The Who in Grant Writing: What if you are not well known?"](#)

[Video "Writing grants isn't about having a hypothesis, it's about psychology"](#)

Business Documentation, and Related Concepts

What is Business Documentation?

Business documentation, are records that can be used as proof, evidence, or supporting evidence in regard to business transactions, legal matters, taxation, the hiring or firing of employees, and the marketing of goods and services. There are many types of business documentation, which I am dividing into the following four categories:

- 1) Official documents, issued by government agencies, schools, and other organizations, such as licenses, certificates, diplomas, deeds, and patents
- 2) Financial documents, relate to money, purchases, expenses, salaries, sales, profits, and losses This includes receipts, bank

account statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and tax documents.

3) Legal documents, that might be created with the assistance a lawyer, such as contracts, leases, privacy statements, and disclaimers

4) Self-created documentation, are documents that can be created by an individual or business, such as a resume, business plan, a statement of purpose, a return policy, a set of rules for employees

I am focusing on Self-created documentation, because it involves writing. When creating any documents in this category, try to write them so that it coincides with official documents that you possess. For example, the educational level indicated on a resume, can be backed up by diplomas. Another example is a business plan, which can be backed up by appropriate licenses needed to operate the business.

Self-created documentation, should be backed up by some type of proof or evidence, whenever possible. The evidence does not necessarily have to be an official document. For example, if you have an established business, and you create a new business plan to attract investors, the physical layout of the business is a good source of evidence. Another example, skills that can be easily demonstrated on the web, in videos, in person, or by any other means, can serve as supporting evidence for claims of such skills in a business plan or resume.

The statements in self-created documentation, should be accurate and honest. Do not write any deceptive statements. Deceptive statements can be created inadvertently, and you should proofread, to find and remove, any wording that might be misleading.

When writing self-created documentation, you should write any factual statement that may be helpful for your objective. Do not try to eliminate anything that is in your favor, to be concise. However, your document should be written clearly and concisely, without eliminating facts that will be in your favor.

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