

## **BUSINESS RESEARCH REPORT**

At the end of a business research it is necessary to prepare a business research report and transmit the findings and recommendations to the manager for the purpose of decision making. The results of the research may be communicated via letter, written report, oral presentation or some combination of these.

### Business Research Format

#### Section I

1. Prefatory Information
2. Letter of Transmission
3. Title Page
4. Authorization Statement
5. Executive Summary
6. Table of Contents

#### Section II Introduction

Problem Statement

Research Objectives

Background

#### Section III Methodology

Sampling Design

Research Design

Data Collection

Data Analysis

Limitations

#### Section IV Findings

#### Section V Conclusions

Summary and Conclusions

Recommendations

#### Section VI Appendices

#### Section VII Bibliography

## RESEARCH REPORT COMPONENTS

### Section I Prefatory Items

Prefatory materials do not have direct bearing on the research itself. They assist the reader in using the research report.

Letter of Transmittal – When the report is for an outside organization, a letter of transmittal should be included. The letter should refer to the authorization for the project and any specific instructions or limitations placed on the study.

Title Page—The title page should include four items : the title of the report, the date, and for whom and by whom it was prepared. The title should include the following three elements: (i) the variables included in the study, (ii) the type of relationship among the variables and (iii) the population to which the results may be applied.

Authorization Letter---- When the report is sent to a public organization, it should include a letter of authorization showing the authority for undertaking the research. This letter delineates the original request and also who sponsored the research.

Executive Summary--- This is a concise summary of the major findings and conclusions including recommendations. Two pages are generally sufficient for an executive summary.

Table of Contents--- Since the report has several sections, it should have a table of contents. If there are many tables, charts or other exhibits, they should also be listed after the table of contents in a separate table of illustrations.

**2. Introduction** - The introduction prepares the reader for the report. It contains the problem statement, research objectives and background material.

Problem Statement --- The problem statement contains the need for the research project. It is usually represented by a management question. And it is followed by a detailed set of objectives.

Research Objectives --- The research objectives give the purpose of the project. They enumerate the information the researcher is seeking in the research. In correlational or causal studies the hypothesis statements are included in this sub-section. Hypotheses are declarative statements describing

the relationship between two or more variables. Operational definitions of the variables should be included in this sub-section.

Background --- Background material may be of two types

- (i) It may be the results of exploration from an experience survey, focus group or some other source .
- (ii) It could be secondary data from the literature review.

**3. Methodology** --- This section gives a detailed description of the method used to arrive at the findings. It contains at least five parts.

Sampling Design --- The researcher defines the target population and the sampling method used ; whether it was a probability or non-probability sample the specific technique of sampling and the size of the sample.

Research Design --- The researcher must state whether he has used an experimental or non-experimental design. In an experimental study, the materials, tests, equipment, control conditions and other devices should be described. In descriptive or ex-post facto designs, the rationale for using the particular design must be provided. The strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the design, as well as the instruments and materials used must be discussed.

Data Collection--- This section gives the details of gathering data. If the research involved a survey, how were the field investigators trained and managed When were the data collected? How much time did it take? What were the conditions in the field? How were difficulties handled? If it was an experiment, where subjects assigned to groups? How were variables manipulated and controlled? How were tests administered, what instructions were given to subjects?

Data Analysis--- This section summarizes the methods used to analyze the data. It describes the statistical tests, computer programs and other technical information.

Limitations--- This section presents the methodology or implementation problems.

**4 Findings** --- This is the longest section of the report. The objective is to explain the data rather than draw interpretations or conclusions. When quantitative data are to be presented, it should be done as simply as possible with charts, graphs and tables.

The researcher should report findings unfavourable to the hypotheses as well as those that support them.

Findings can be presented in numbered paragraphs. Or they can be presented one finding per page.

## **5 Conclusions**

Summary and Conclusions--- The summary is a brief statement of the essential findings. Findings state facts, conclusions represent inferences drawn from the findings. The researcher must not draw conclusions that go beyond the data related to the study.

Recommendations--- This sub-section of the report offers ideas for corrective actions. In business/applied research, the recommendations will be for managerial action, with the researcher suggesting several alternatives which are supported by the findings. The researcher may also recommend further research initiatives. In pure research, the recommendations are suggestions for further study which broaden the understanding of a particular subject area.

Appendices--- The appendices incorporate complex tables, statistical tests, supporting documents, copies of forms and questionnaires, instructions to field workers and other evidence important for later support.

Bibliography--- Bibliography documents the sources used by the writer. Although bibliographies contain work used as background or for further study, it is preferable to include only sources used for preparing the report.