

Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies  
Internationally Educated Professionals Bridging Program



# Professional Communication in a Canadian Context

## Business Reports



redefine THE POSSIBLE.





# Objectives

- To review types of informal, semiformal and formal business reports
- To examine the components of reports
- To analyse the process of report writing
- To convert data to business intelligence
- To review documentation procedures



# Types of Reports

- Incident
  - Reports the lead-in, details and outcome of an unusual occurrence - often safety related
- Job progress
  - Provides updates on completed, in-progress and planned future work for an in-process project
- Job completion
  - Reports on level of success of a completed job
  - Details the purpose, scope and schedule, highlights, challenges, exceptions and outcome



# Types of Reports

- Travel
  - Indicates the purpose and achievements of the trip, describes the scope/parameters
  - details accomplishments, challenges, outcomes and next steps
- Conference
  - Provides overall assessment of the conference,
  - details the scope, highlights, unscheduled events, and next steps



# Types of Reports

- Problem Investigation
  - Introduces, explores and analyses a situation
  - Provides recommendations on solutions, next steps
- Proposal
  - Provides overview of what needs to be done and why
  - Describes details of how the proposal will work
  - Discusses benefits and costs
  - Recommends actions to be taken
  - Includes documentation/drawings, etc.



# Evaluation Reports

- Comparative Analysis
  - Compare different products, plans, ideas or methods to identify which is the most suitable for a particular situation.
  - Primarily Objective Approach
    - opinions do not appear until recommendations
  - Primarily Subjective Approach
    - Opinions appear during analysis of alternatives



# Comparative Analysis

Introduce subjects + basic guidelines

## POA

- Describe subjects
  - Objective, impersonal
- Identify selection criteria
- Compare subjects against criteria
  - Indicate significance of findings (persuasive)
- Draw conclusions
  - Compare subjects to e/o
  - Determine the best choice
  - 7 – Recommend next steps

## PSA

- Establish selection criteria
- Describe subjects
  - Compare each subject to criteria
  - Indicate significance of findings (persuasive)
- Draw conclusions
  - Compare subjects to each other
  - Determine the best choice
  - Recommend next steps



# Informal vs. Semi-formal

## Informal

- Usually short
- Situation is simple
- Little detailed analysis necessary
- E-mail or memo
- Uses first person “I”

## Semi-formal

- Usually longer
- Situation is complex
- Headings are helpful
- More detailed analysis
- E-mail, memo or letter
- Uses first person “I”



# Formal Reports

## Formal Report

- Includes more sections with headings
- Is bound with a cover and title page
- Involves more in-depth analysis and detail
- Uses the third person or first person “we”
- Includes secondary source material



# Formal Reports

- Cover
- Title Page
- Summary or Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- List of references (or Bibliography)
- Appendices

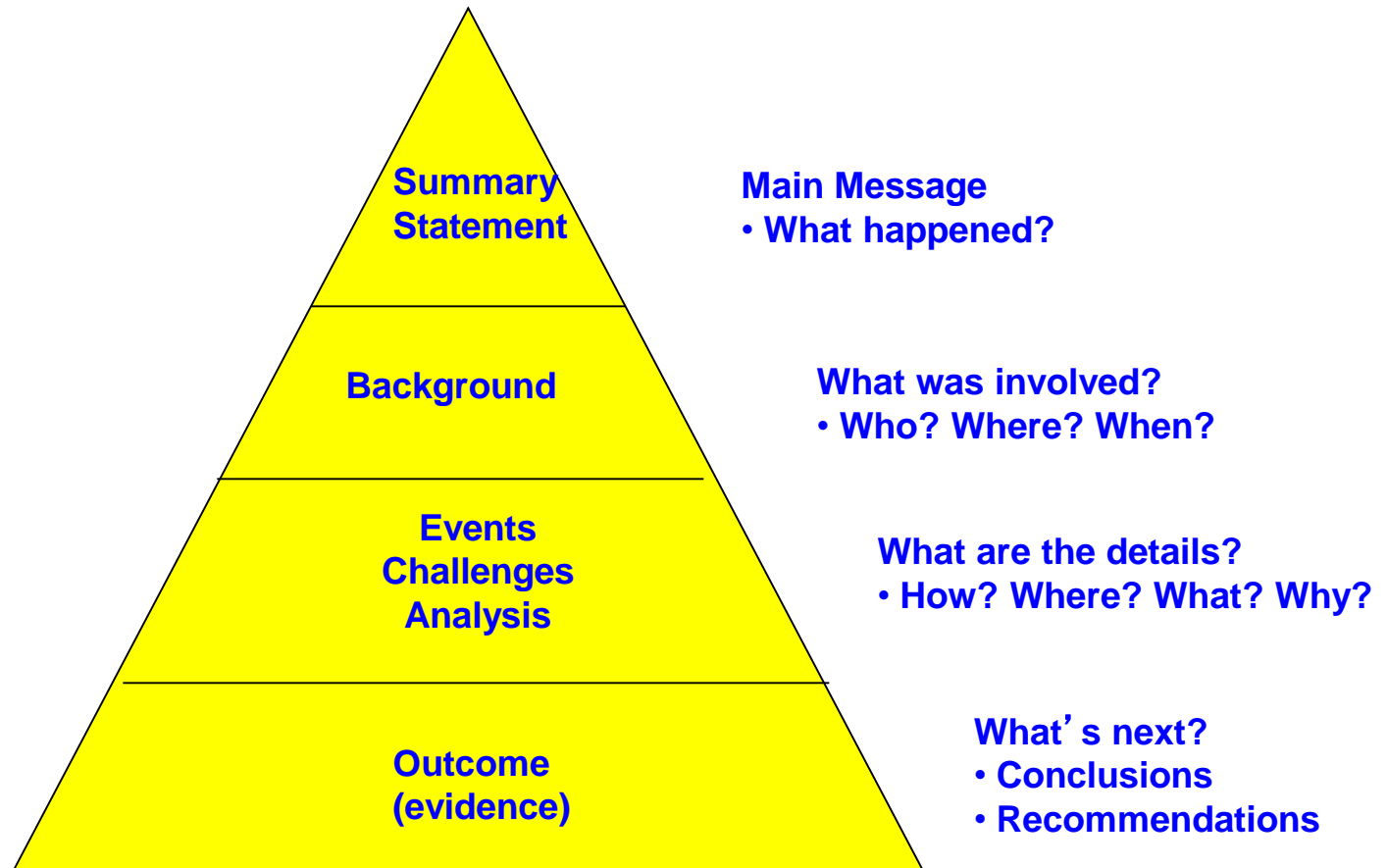


# Formal Reports

- Summary
  - Brief synopsis of purpose, main findings and outcome
- Introduction
  - Background, reasons, scope, parameters
- Discussion
  - Steps, findings, analysis, results, alternatives
- Conclusions
  - Summary of the outcome (main results)
- Recommendations
  - Actions that need to be taken
- Appendices
  - Data - tables, charts, drawings, etc.



# The Writer's Pyramid





# Report Writing Process

1. Make notes - keep track of important events, observations, details
2. Sort - create headings and arrange information to create the writer's pyramid
3. Organize - arrange points logically to develop a coherent, persuasive message
4. Write - clearly and confidently
5. Revise - ensure clarity, accuracy, precision



# Create Business Intelligence

- Create meaningful summary statements
- Discuss significance of results, findings or outcomes
- Establish criteria for analysis
- Provide meaningful captions for graphs
- Make strong recommendations



# Create Business Intelligence

- Summary or Abstract
  - Most important page of a formal report
  - Must be catch the reader's attention
  - Must clearly and concisely cover all key points of the report
    - The purpose of the project, study, investigation, proposal
    - The main highlights
    - The outcomes or results
    - The actions that need to be taken
  - Must be informative, providing key information



# Create Business Intelligence

- Discuss significance of results
  - Why is this important?
  - How does this affect business?
  - What does this imply?
  - How does this relate to other factors?



# Create Business Intelligence

- Establish criteria for analysis
  - What are the products, processes or services being compared - why these?
  - How are your criteria relevant or useful for this comparison?
  - How does each product, plan or service measure up against these criteria?
  - What are your conclusions and recommendations?



# Create Business Intelligence

- Make illustrations meaningful
  - Ensure every illustration adds value
  - Indicate what the graph or chart is showing
  - Highlight important features
  - Discuss the findings in terms of outcomes and significance



# Create Business Intelligence

- Make strong recommendations
  - Keep them short and strong
  - Use the active voice with “I”, “we” or company name
  - Position in order of importance or primacy
  - Ensure recommendations evolve logically from conclusions and discussion
  - Use separate subparagraphs for each conclusion



# Documentation

- List all sources used for the report
  - To validate data mentioned in the report
  - To help readers find original source
  - To acknowledge the originator of the data
  - To avoid accusations of plagiarism
- Use appropriate format and conventions
- Refer to [www.dianahacker.com](http://www.dianahacker.com), etc.



# Conclusions

- Reports follow the same basic rules as documents
- Informal/semi-formal reports are often informative
- Proposals/formal reports are often persuasive
- Full discussion of evidence, significance and outcomes adds value and builds your case
- Professional presentation includes appearance, organization, language and tone