Business report style

A business report is supposed to be *easy to read* to enable busy managers to read it quickly. It is the “easy to read” aspect that makes this approach attractive in the exam situation.

1. **write in short , concise sentences and keep the paragraphs relatively short** ……… ie Use the KISS principal.

2. **leave a line between each paragraph**…… especially if your writing is untidy and/or difficult to read and/or you are using a prose style. Try and make it easy for the marker.

The following general features of business report style *can* be applied to the writing of your extended responses:

� **Executive Summary** or introduction that outlines the information and issues that are included in the report. For exam purposes you must keep this relatively brief - focus on the main sections you have identified in the question and that you will focus on in your response. ***Try to avoid simply restating the question****.*

� use a heading at the beginning of each part of the response. Underline or highlight the heading eg. Funding Alternatives for Global Expansion

� use sub-headings where appropriate

� underline key terms or points

� use relevant and appropriate business language (defining them where appropriate) and concepts

� list [using dot points , numbers or letters] where appropriate.

Any use of a list should follow an introductory sentence ……

eg. An industrial dispute is a disagreement or conflict between management and employees. The main causes of industrial disputes are:

 wages

 working conditions

 management policy

 government policy

 trade unionism

You may then choose to explain each dot point in more detail, select specific points to explain in more detail, or move on ……… it depends on the question you are answering.

Each dot point in the list may contain more detail within it  *ie*. you may choose to define or explain each term. If you do this it is probably a good idea to underline the term to make it stand out from the explanation. eg:

 wages – the remuneration paid to employees in the form of wages, salaries , penalty rates …….

 working conditions – including working hours , overtime , holidays , sick leave entitlements ……

The executive summary will be most effective if you include here a brief overview of the intended

outcomes followed by the recommendations you intend to include to achieve those outcomes ie. go for ‘the big picture” …… to attract marker attention

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� Use diagrams, tables , charts etc. where appropriate. Ensure that they follow an appropriate introductory

sentence; are large & clearly labeled; and explained (if necessary).

eg. Because of the dynamic nature of the business environment the marketing process must be a continuous cycle. This should ensure it remains flexible and responsive to the changing nature of the market. Such a marketing process can be seen in the following diagram :~

**THE MARKETING PROCESS**

Organising the planning process

Ø

Analysing market opportunities

Ø

Selecting target markets

Ø

Developing the marketing mix

Ø

Managing the marketing effort

� The use of appropriate abbreviations is accepted. However, it is a good idea that you use the full, correct term with the abbreviation in brackets on the first occasion the term is required in your response. Use the abbreviation thereafter.

eg. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission(ACCC) was established by the federal government to ensure markets in Australia remain competitive and that the rights of various stakeholders are protected. The ACCC has responsibility for….

In the Report Question it may be a good idea to make up an acronym for the scenario business so that it is not necessary to write the whole name every time it is used

eg. Kingland Office Supplies (KOS)

**Do not** Ö include irrelevant information. While it is tempting to include as much as you have learnt as possible, if it does not contribute to answering the question, then it won’t get you any marks and it doesn’t make a good impression on the marker…… it may appear that you didn’t really know what the question was asking.

Ö use the first person (“I” or “we”) , as in , “I think that…” or “We have studied….”.

Ö use a conversational / anecdotal style …… avoid the vernacular (ie use formal language and business terms)

� It is not necessary to do a situation analysis or a SWOT analysis unless it is relevant to the question. Quite often they are not done well and, therefore, do not create a good impression on the marker. A better strategy is to make reference to them without actually including them eg. “The recommended strategy is designed to address the inventory control issues identified as a significant weakness in the SWOT analysis”

**Enhancing “the impression”.**

Students will enhance the impression their answer makes on a marker by demonstrating a clear “feel” for business beyond the “standard text book approach”. This is especially important when interpreting the business scenario and in making recommendations for strategies ….. they must be relevant and appropriate to that business, in that market, at that time ie. they must make sense!..... and, have a clear chance of being successful. Accordingly, if you have time, when asked to “recommend”, also “justify”; when asked to “outline a range of alternatives”, also

“recommend” what you think is the most appropriate of those alternatives.