

## WHAT IS RESEARCH?

Business research can be defined as “a systematic and scientific procedure of data collection, compilation, analysis, interpretation, and implication pertaining to any business problem”.

Research is a systematic inquiry to describe, explain, predict and control the observed phenomenon. Research involves inductive and deductive methods (Babbie, 1998). Inductive methods analyze the observed phenomenon and identify the general principles, structures, or processes underlying the phenomenon observed; deductive methods verify the hypothesized principles through observations. The purposes are different: one is to develop explanations, and the other is to test the validity of the explanations.

## Research purposes

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**Research** involves systematic investigation of phenomena, the purpose of which could be for:

1. **Information gathering** and/or
  1. **Exploratory**: e.g., discovering, uncovering, exploring
  2. **Descriptive**: e.g., gathering info, describing, summarizing
2. **Theory testing**
  1. **Explanatory**: e.g., testing and understanding causal relations
  2. **Predictive**: e.g., predicting what might happen in various scenarios

### What are the purposes of research?

Patton (1990) pointed out the importance of identifying the purpose in a research process. He classified four types of research based on different purposes:

1. **Basic Research**: This research is conducted largely for the enhancement of knowledge, and is research which does not have immediate commercial potential. The research which is done for human welfare, animal welfare and plant kingdom welfare. It is called basic, pure, fundamental research. The purpose of this research is to understand and explain. This type of research takes the form of a theory that explains the phenomenon under investigation to give its contribution to knowledge. This research is more descriptive in nature exploring what, why and how questions.

2. **Applied Research:** Applied research is designed to solve practical problems of the modern world, rather than to acquire knowledge for knowledge's sake. The goal of applied research is to improve the human condition. It focuses on analysis and solving social and real life problems. This research is generally conducted on a large scale basis and is expensive. As such, it is often conducted with the support of some financing agency like the national government, public corporation, World Bank, UNICEF, UGC, Etc. According to Hunt, “applied research is an investigation for ways of using scientific knowledge to solve practical problems” for example:- improve agriculture crop production.
3. **Evaluation Research** (summative and formative): Evaluation research studies the processes and outcomes aimed at attempted solution. The purpose of formative research is to improve human intervention within specific conditions, such as activities, time, and groups of people; the purpose of summative evaluation is to judge the effectiveness of a program, policy, or product.
4. **Action Research:** Action research aims at solving specific problems within a program, organization, or community. Patton (1990) described that design and data collection in action research tends to be more informal, and the people in the situation are directly involved in gathering information and studying themselves.

### **Other Types of Research**

#### Quantitative Research

This research is based on numeric figures or numbers. Quantitative research aim to measure the quantity or amount and compares it with past records and tries to project for future period. In social sciences, “quantitative research refers to the systematic empirical investigation of quantitative properties and phenomena and their relationships”. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories or hypothesis pertaining to phenomena.

The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative

relationships. Statistics is the most widely used branch of mathematics in quantitative research. Statistical methods are used extensively with in fields such as economics and commerce.

### **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research presents non-quantitative type of analysis. Qualitative research is collecting, analyzing and interpreting data by observing what people do and say. Qualitative research refers to the meanings, definitions, characteristics, symbols, metaphors, and description of things.

Qualitative research is much more subjective and uses very different methods of collecting information, mainly individual, in-depth interviews and focus groups. The nature of this type of research is exploratory and open ended. Small number of people is interviewed in depth and or a relatively small number of focus groups are conducted.

### **Types of Research Methods According to Nature of the Study**

Types of the research methods according to the nature of research can be divided into two groups: descriptive and analytical.

**Descriptive research** usually involves surveys and studies that aim to identify the facts. In other words, descriptive research mainly deals with the “description of the state of affairs as it is at present” and there is no control over variables in descriptive research.

**Analytical research**, on the other hand, is fundamentally different in a way that “the researcher has to use facts or information already available and analyse these in order to make a critical evaluation of the material”.

### **Research Process**

Scientific research involves a systematic process that focuses on being objective and gathering a multitude of information for analysis so that the researcher can come to a conclusion.. The scientific research process is a multiple-step process where the steps are interlinked with the other steps in the process. If changes are made in one step of the process, the researcher must review all the other steps to ensure that the changes are reflected throughout the process. Professionals need to understand the eight steps of the research process as they apply to conducting a study.

### **Step 1: Identify the Problem**

The first step in the process is to identify a problem or develop a research question. The research problem may be something the agency identifies as a problem, some knowledge or information that is needed by the agency.

### **Step 2: Review the Literature**

Now that the problem has been identified, the researcher must learn more about the topic under investigation. To do this, the researcher must review the literature related to the research problem. This step provides foundational knowledge about the problem area. The review of literature also educates the researcher about what studies have been conducted in the past, how these studies were conducted, and the conclusions in the problem area.

### **Step 3: Clarify the Problem**

Many times the initial problem identified in the first step of the process is too large or broad in scope. In step 3 of the process, the researcher clarifies the problem and narrows the scope of the study. This can only be done after the literature has been reviewed. The knowledge gained through the review of literature guides the researcher in clarifying and narrowing the research project.

### **Step 4: Clearly Define Terms and Concepts**

Terms and concepts are words or phrases used in the purpose statement of the study or the description of the study. These items need to be specifically defined as they apply to the study. Terms or concepts often have different definitions depending on who is reading the study. To minimize confusion about what the terms and phrases mean, the researcher must specifically define them for the study. This also makes the concepts more understandable to the reader.

### **Step 5: Define the Population**

Research projects can focus on a specific group of people, facilities, park development, employee evaluations, programs, financial status, marketing efforts.. For example, if a researcher wants to examine a specific group of people in the community, the study could examine a specific age group, males or females, people living in a specific geographic area. The research problem and the purpose of the study assist the researcher in identifying the group to involve in the study. In research terms, the group to involve in the study is always called the population. Defining the population assists the researcher in several ways.

First, it narrows the scope of the study from a very large population to one that is manageable. Second, the population identifies the group that the researcher's efforts will be focused on within the study. Finally, by defining the population, the researcher identifies the group that the results will apply to at the conclusion of the study.

### **Step 6: Develop the Instrumentation Plan**

The plan for the study is referred to as the instrumentation plan. The instrumentation plan serves as the road map for the entire study, specifying who will participate in the study; how, when, and where data will be collected; and the content of the program. The instrumentation plan specifies all the steps that must be completed for the study.

### **Step 7: Collect Data**

Once the instrumentation plan is completed, the actual study begins with the collection of data. The collection of data is a critical step in providing the information needed to answer the research question. Every study includes the collection of some type of data—whether it is from the literature or from subjects—to answer the research question. Data can be collected in the form of words on a survey, with a questionnaire, through observations, or from the literature. Once the data are collected on the variables, the researcher is ready to move to the final step of the process, which is the data analysis.

### **Step 8: Analyze the Data**

The researcher finally has data to analyze so that the research question can be answered. In the instrumentation plan, the researcher specified how the data will be analyzed. The researcher now analyzes the data according to the plan. The results of this analysis are then reviewed and summarized in a manner directly related to the research questions.

### **What is Business Report**

Business reports are a type of assignment in which you analyse a situation (either a real situation or a case study) and apply business theories to produce a range of suggestions for improvement.

Business reports are typically assigned to enable you to:

Examine available and potential solutions to a problem, situation, or issue.

Apply business and management theory to a practical situation.

Demonstrate your analytical, reasoning, and evaluation skills in identifying and weighing-up possible

solutions and outcomes.

Reach conclusions about a problem or issue.

Provide recommendations for future action.

Show concise and clear communication skills.

### **Short Report vs Long Report**

Writing a report in business is a necessity and there are times when as a business manager you are required to write a detailed report and also times when you need to pass on concise information in a summarized fashion. These are known as short report and long reports and though they may contain similar information, there are differences in format, style, depth and of course the length. Let us take a closer look at the two types of reports.

The aim of any report, whether long or short is to be clear so that the information that is intended to be passed on is easily understood. Writing a report is a skill that is a must for all professional managers. It has to be understood that a report presents facts and figures and it is not to press for an argument which is the case in an essay. Any reader does not have an eternity to read a report leisurely and as such any report, whether long or short, must use short and concise paragraphs with headings and subheadings and important points underlined to stress their importance.

A short report is also called informal report while a long report is sometimes referred to as formal report. A short report is often no more than a single page of statement containing facts and figures in the most concise manner. A short report is like a memorandum and does not need a cover. This style of report is often casual and relaxed. The style of writing includes use of first person such as I and We in sharp contrast to long report where full names of people are used.

A long report always has a title, introduction, body, and then conclusion. It is always more than one page in length. It sometimes contains a covering letter that mentions all the details that are included in the long report. At the end of the long report, there is bibliography and appendix. It is common to have a long report printed and bound with hard cover.

## **Short Report**

### **PURPOSE:**

When a brief written communication is necessary and can do the job for the reader.

- ☐ For example, a weekly or monthly financial or production report can be handled by a Short Report.
- ☐ Or, a proposal for a simple project or improvement on a process can be written up in a Short Report.

### **WHAT IS THE FORM?**

Can be written as a Letter or as a Memo.

- ☐ **Memo** when it is written within your department or company. (Sometimes a letter is OK here.)
- ☐ **Letter** when it is written for outside your company.

### **HOW MANY PAGES?**

Short Reports are usually one page (two pages maximum).

However, attachments can be several pages.

### **WHAT ARE THE PARTS?**

There are usually 4 parts.

- 1) Summary
- 2) Background (which is optional and not always necessary)
- 3) Body (main contents) The content may even include a simple, small chart or diagram (if it contains lots of information, is complex or several pages, then include it in the “attachments” section).
- 4) Recommendation or Conclusion (use either one, depending on the subject/purpose of your report).

## **Technical Report Writing**

### **1 Introduction**

A technical report is a formal report designed to convey technical information in a clear and easily accessible format. It is divided into sections which allow different readers to access different levels of information. This guide explains the commonly accepted format for a technical report; explains the purposes of the individual sections; and gives hints on how to go about drafting and refining a report in order to produce an accurate, professional document.

### **2 Structure**

A technical report should contain the following sections;

<b>Section</b>	<b>Details</b>
Title page	Must include the title of the report. Reports for assessment, where the word length has been specified, will often also require the summary word count and the main text word count
Summary	A summary of the whole report including important features, results and conclusions
Contents	Numbers and lists all section and subsection headings with page numbers
Introduction	States the objectives of the report and comments on the way the topic of the report is to be treated. Leads straight into the report itself. Must not be a copy of the introduction in a lab handout.
The sections which make up	Divided into numbered and headed sections. These sections separate the



the body of the report	different main ideas in a logical order
Conclusions	A short, logical summing up of the theme(s) developed in the main text
References	Details of published sources of material referred to or quoted in the text (including any lecture notes and URL addresses of any websites used.
Bibliography	Other published sources of material, including websites, not referred to in the text but useful for background or further reading.
Acknowledgements	List of people who helped you research or prepare the report, including your proofreaders
Appendices (if appropriate)	Any further material which is essential for full understanding of your report (e.g. large scale diagrams, computer code, raw data, specifications) but not required by a casual reader

## **Business Letters**

The term “business letters” refers to any written communication that begins with a salutation, ends with a signature and whose contents are professional in nature. Historically, business letters were sent via postal mail or courier, although the internet is rapidly changing the way businesses communicate. There are many standard types of business letters, and each of them has a specific focus.

## **Types of Business Letters**

### **Sales Letters**

Typical sales letters start off with a very strong statement to capture the interest of the reader. Since the purpose is to get the reader to do something, these letters include strong calls to action,

detail the benefit to the reader of taking the action and include information to help the reader to act, such as including a telephone number or website link.

### Order Letters

Order letters are sent by consumers or businesses to a manufacturer, retailer or wholesaler to order goods or services. These letters must contain specific information such as model number, name of the product, the quantity desired and expected price. Payment is sometimes included with the letter.

### Complaint Letters

The words and tone you choose to use in a letter complaining to a business may be the deciding factor on whether your complaint is satisfied. Be direct but tactful and always use a professional tone if you want the company to listen to you.

### Adjustment Letters

An adjustment letter is normally sent in response to a claim or complaint. If the adjustment is in the customer's favor, begin the letter with that news. If not, keep your tone factual and let the customer know that you understand the complaint.

### Inquiry Letters

Inquiry letters ask a question or elicit information from the recipient. When composing this type of letter, keep it clear and succinct and list exactly what information you need. Be sure to include your contact information so that it is easy for the reader to respond.

### Follow-Up Letters

Follow-up letters are usually sent after some type of initial communication. This could be a sales department thanking a customer for an order, a businessman reviewing the outcome of a meeting or a job seeker inquiring about the status of his application. In many cases, these letters are a combination thank-you note and sales letter.

### Letters of Recommendation

Prospective employers often ask job applicants for letters of recommendation before they hire them. This type of letter is usually from a previous employer or professor, and it describes the sender's relationship with and opinion of the job seeker.

### Acknowledgment Letters

Acknowledgment letters act as simple receipts. Businesses send them to let others know that they have received a prior communication, but action may or may not have taken place.

### Cover Letters

Cover letters usually accompany a package, report or other merchandise. They are used to describe what is enclosed, why it is being sent and what the recipient should do with it, if there is any action that needs to be taken. These types of letters are generally very short and succinct.

### Letters of Resignation

When an employee plans to leave his job, a letter of resignation is usually sent to his immediate manager giving him notice and letting him know when the last day of employment will be. In many cases, the employee also will detail his reason for leaving the company.

## **Parts of a Business Letter**

A **business letter** is more formal than a personal letter. It should have a margin of at least one inch on all four edges. It is always written on 8½"x11" (or metric equivalent) unlined stationery. The Parts of a Business Letter may be grouped into major parts and minor (supplementary) parts. Knowledge of business letter is essential for anyone in or entering the workplace. Professional types of correspondence such as letters of application, sales letters and letters of reference differ from friendly letters in that they must follow a specific format and should never include informal or slang language.

### **The Seven Major (Essential) Parts of a Business letter include:**

1. **Letterhead or Heading.** Most professional business correspondence is printed on a letterhead template. A letterhead contains the company name, address and contact information. An individual may also create a letterhead that contains his name and personal

contact information. While some individuals may choose not to create a formal letterhead, it is always necessary to include a header with the sender's information.

2. **Date.** Simply put, the date is the day the letter is sent. The most commonly used date format is: August 6, 2018. Do not abbreviate the month and always include all four digits of the year.
3. **Inside Address.** This is the address of the recipient. If applicable, the first line in the address block should include the recipient's name and title, and the second line should state the recipient's company or business. The third and fourth lines are designated for the actual address.
4. **Greetings or Salutation.** Different circumstances determine which salutation or greeting is most appropriate. Use "*Dear*" when the recipient's name or title is known. Examples include "*Dear Mr. Doe*" or "*Dear Sales Director.*" When the name or title is unknown, use "*To Whom It May Concern.*" Always punctuate the salutation of a business letter with a colon (:) instead of a comma.
5. **Body.** The body is the longest part of a letter and is usually divided into three subcategories: introduction, main content and summary. The introductory paragraph states the purpose of the letter. The main content conveys all necessary detailed information and has no set length requirements. The last paragraph summarizes the information provided, restates the letter intent and offers either instructions or an inquiry regarding follow-up correspondence.
6. **Complimentary Close.** The complimentary close is a word or short phrase that basically means "goodbye." "*Sincerely*" is the most common closing remark. Others include "*cordially,*" "*best wishes,*" and "*best regards.*" The complimentary close can vary in degrees of formality and is dependent upon the relationship between the sender and recipient.
7. **Signature.** In letters that are sent via email, the signature is simply the sender's name and title typed immediately below the complimentary close. When a letter is mailed, faxed or hand-delivered, however, there should be a large enough space below the closing and above the typed name and title for the sender to provide her written signature.

### **The Minor (Supplemental) Parts of a Business Letter are as follows:**

1. **Attention Line.** This part directs letter to a specific person or position who will read and pay attention to the letter. It is often written using the format: *Attention: <Name> <Position>*
2. **Subject Line.** This part identifies main topic/business/purpose why the letter was written. It is often written using the format: *Subject: <Adjustment Letter>* or with the use of *Re: <Letter of Inquiry>*
3. **Identification initials.** This part contains the initials of whoever typed the business letter. For example, the initials, /SSA identifies that Salirick S. Andres typed the letter.
4. **Enclosure or attachment notation.** This part contains any attached documents or any additional material in the mail or envelope. For example, the enclosure notation, *Encl (5)* identifies that there are five enclosed or attached documents in the letter.
5. **Copy notation.** This part identifies other persons or parties receiving the letter whether as a *Carbon Copy (CC) where all recipients know who else received the letter* or a *Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) where each recipient is unaware who else received the letter.*
6. **Postscript.** This part, normally written as *Post Script or PS* adds personal comment or emphasis or any additional message the writer wants to include but not able to include it in the body of the letter.

### **Memorandum**

Suppose you are the head boy or head girl of your school. You are given the responsibility of organizing an exhibition. What is the first thing that you do? You will first try to note down all the tasks that need to be done. You will note down the details of the task and the person given respective responsibility. Also, you use formal communication to the principal, teachers and other people in position. Similarly, in business also we need to note down details and communicate to other individuals in the organization. This way of communication in business is memorandum. In this section, we will study memorandum.

### **Memorandum Definition**

A memorandum is a note or a record for future use. For an organization, it is very important to have an efficient way of communication. It is an interoffice tool. It has a number of purposes.

In simple words, a memorandum is a written message or information from one person or department to another in the same business. It is less formal than a letter.

A memorandum is often abbreviated as a memo. Effective memos clearly state the objective in the first sentence.

### **Purpose of Memorandum**

A person writes a memo with some purposes in mind. It is used

- To inform.
- To inquire.
- One can use it to report.
- To give suggestions.
- To remind.
- One can use it to instruct.
- One can promote goodwill using a memo.
- To communicate the ideas.

### **Advantages of Memos**

Using memos has a number of advantages. Memos are

- Memorandum is quick.
- It is a convenient mean of communication.

- It is inexpensive. Memos are used within an organization so one can use low-quality paper.
- It helps in maintaining written records.

## **Parts of Memorandum**

There are mainly five parts of a memorandum. They are

### Heading Segment

The heading segment of a memo has four basic sections.

TO: Reader's names and job titles

FROM: sender's name and job title

DATE: Complete date

SUBJECT: Reason for writing a memo

### Opening Segment

In this segment, one can find the purpose of the memo. The opening paragraph includes the reason or the motive of writing a memo. It gives a brief overview of the memo.

### Context

It is the event or circumstance of the problem the writer is solving. One should clearly mention the context.

### Task Segment

It is the segment one must include to mention the steps for solving the problem. One must only include the needed information. Do proper planning before writing a memo.

### Summary Segment

If a memo is more than a page, one must include a separate summary segment. It is not necessary for a short memo. It helps the reader to understand the main idea of the memo. Also, it helps to take the required steps.

### Discussion Segment

It is the longest part of a memo. It includes all the details supporting the ideas. Remember to start with general information and then go for more specific one. It includes supporting ideas, facts, and research.

### Closing Segment

Always end your memo with courteous words. Make sure you make the completion of the task in an efficient and easy way. Try to lure the reader to make the positive action.

### Necessary Attachments

One can also attach lists, graphs, tables etc. at the end of a memo. Make a reference for your attachments and add a notation for them.

### **The format of a Memo**



Memorandum		
To	:	_____
From	:	_____
Date	:	_____
Subject:		_____
Body of the Memo containing the details _____		
_____		
_____		

#### Important Points to Remember

- Always use a clear and specific subject line.
- Do not waste the reader's time by using lengthy memos. Be clear and concise.
- Use the active voice.
- Use the first person.
- Be formal.
- Avoids slangs and friendly words.
- One should use a careful and logical arrangement of information.
- Keep the paragraphs short.
- One can use enumerations for the paragraphs.
- One can use solid capitals and center indentation for important details.
- Use of bullets to make points.

- Always end the memo in courteous words.
- Use text fonts and color to attract attention.
- Avoid rude and thoughtless memos.
- It does not need a complimentary close or a signature.
- Proofread the content before sending.

## **Electronic-Mail**

**Electronic mail (email or e-mail)** is a method of exchanging messages ("mail") between people using electronic devices. Email first entered limited use in the 1960s, but users could only send to others who used the same computer, and some early email systems even required the author and the recipient to both be online at the same time, similar to instant messaging.

Email operates across computer networks, which today is primarily the Internet. Today's email systems are based on a forward model. Email servers accept, forward, deliver, and store messages. Neither the users nor their computers are required to be online simultaneously; they need to connect only briefly, typically to a mail server or a webmail interface for as long as it takes to send or receive messages or to download it.

## **Advantages and disadvantages of using email for business**

**Email** is an important method of business communication that is fast, cheap, accessible and easily replicated. Using email can greatly benefit businesses as it provides efficient and effective ways to transmit all kinds of electronic data.

### **Advantages of using email**

Email can increase efficiency, productivity and your business readiness. Using email in business is:

- **cheap** - sending an email costs the same regardless of distance and the number of people you send it to

- **fast** - an email should reach its recipient in minutes, or at the most within a few hours
- **convenient** - your message will be stored until the recipient is ready to read it, and you can easily send the same message to a large number of people
- **permanent** - you can keep a record of messages and replies, including details of when a message was received.

One of the main **advantages of email** is that you can quickly and easily send electronic files such as text documents, photos and data sheets to several contacts simultaneously by attaching the file to an email. Check with your internet service provider if there is a limit to the size of email attachment you can send. Some businesses may also limit the type and size of attachments that they are willing to receive.

You can gain further advantages and increase your efficiency by setting up your email software to:

- automatically create entries in your address book for every message you send or receive
- respond to incoming emails automatically, eg to confirm receipt of an order, or to let people know that you are on leave or out of the office

### **Disadvantages of using email**

Despite the benefits, there are certain weaknesses of email that you should be aware of, such as:

- **Spam** - unsolicited email can overwhelm your email system unless you install a firewall and anti-spam software. Other [internet and email security issues](#) may arise, especially if you're using the cloud or remote access.
- **Viruses** - easily spread through email attachments.
- **Sending emails by mistake** - at a click of a button, an email can go to the wrong person accidentally, potentially leaking confidential data and sensitive business information. You should take care to minimize the likelihood of **business data breach and theft**.
- **Data storage** - electronic storing space can become a problem, particularly where emails with large attachments are widely distributed.