**Writing An Executive Summary**

- A report in miniature—condensed!
- 1st part sums up your hypothesis.
- 2nd part sums up your method and findings.
- 3rd part sums up recommendations.

**Sample 1st Part:**
The travel team, Jacky and Peters, represent Kosher Food Imports. The firm must send its assessor to its office in Tel Aviv, Israel. The assessor insists on an airline based in a “neutral” country—e.g. Canada or Switzerland. She can only fly the 10th to 15th of any month. The firm wants to save costs and send the assessor as soon as possible, but the political situation is risky. The travel team predicts fares will be highest on “neutral” airlines, but business class will be cheapest and travel time will be safest in May or June….

**Get it in Writing:** What variable have you excluded from your project—and how might it affect your recommendations?

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**Narrating Numbers**

“There are lies, there are damned lies, and there are statistics.” —Mark Twain

- Describe background.
- Describe experimental methodology.
- Describe data collection & findings.
- Describe meaning of statistical measures.
- Interpret graphs & results of data.
- Compare results with hypothesis.
- Discuss modifications, conclusions, & recommendations.

**Sample Passage in Report:** Jacky and Peters checked Travelocity.com for economy class flights for March. The fares ranged from $719 to $966, and were on less preferred airlines (e.g. Lot Polish, Turkish, El Al, TWA). The team also called local airline contacts and inquired about typical security procedures. Reduced fare may mean compromised safety under current political circumstances. See pie chart, p. 5 for statistics and brief analysis. An approximate $1000 variance existed among preferred airlines: $6417.60 aboard March 10 itinerary for Canadian/Air Canada/Swissair. $5367.60 aboard May 10 itinerary for Air Canada/Swissair. This finding supports the team’s hypothesis, but on the bar graph, p. 6, statistics and analysis suggest….

**Get it in writing:** What kinds of biases do you think you might have to look out for in your hypothesis and in your method of interpreting the data?

**Choosing Appropriate Visual Aids**

**Graphs:** show trends, movements, distributions, and cycles. They provide a means for comparisons.

**Tables:** show lots of specific, related data in a brief space. They provide rows, columns, groups for comparing.

**Charts:** show how various components of an organization or a collection of data are related. They provide an overview or a “flow” of steps/stages.

**Maps:** show geographic features. They provide information about flight routes, roads, cities, natural sources, etc.

**A few words about color:** **USE IT!**

**Get it in writing:** Identify which visual aids you think you’ll use, and explain why you think those aids are the best.
Interpreting Numbers

- Clearly identify constants & variables.
- Display data collected.
- Provide dates of collected data.
- Give prices for given parameters.
- Provide sources of your information.
- Calculate the mean, median, mode, variance, & standard deviation.
- Choose the graphing method that will communicate statistical information to your audience.

Sample explanation of graph: As the simplified version of the data collected from Travelocity.com on February 10 shows, fares become more uniform in later months. A closer look at the bar graph on page five shows that TWA has the cheaper fares in March and April. Only in May—the suggested month for booking—do the fares appear to stabilize and offer the option of booking on the preferred airlines (Air Canada, Canadian, and Swissair).

Get it in writing: The main argument: what do you hope that your group’s data will prove, when you’ve turned your date into information?

Presenting Your Report

Here are some criteria for a good oral presentation of your project:

1. You give an outline of what you intend to say at the beginning.
2. You divide the presentation up in equal parts so each group member participates.
3. You make sure each group member’s part provides adequate information that fits together logically.
4. You explain visual aids well and use them to illustrate the most important points of your findings.
5. You use techniques that help your listeners feel like participants in your presentation.
6. You prepare handouts that your listeners can use to remember your main message and points.

Get it in writing: What aspect of your project do you feel will need the most development—and why?

Writing with (Business) Style

—Use 3rd person. (e.g. “The team discovered...” not “We discovered”)
—Change expletives such as there are/it is/that was into active. (e.g. “Three days remain...” not “There are three days remaining...”)
—Use active verbs instead of passive. (e.g. “The team voted to...” not “The vote was passed to...”)
—Use active verbs instead of “to be” verbs. (“The group agreed often” not “The group was often agreeable”)
—Edit out unnecessary repetition and wordiness. (“The group avoided conflict” not “Conflict within the group was not really an issue when it came to this project”)

Get it in writing: What style problems did you have in your group’s project proposal that you’ll avoid in your project report?