

## Deliverable 1.3 Students are required to write a report on a given case study (60%)

### Learning Outcomes to be Assessed:

- Consider and critically evaluate approaches to production management.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of financial analysis.
- Communicate findings effectively in written, visual and oral forms.

### Assessment Details:

Case Study Report. Students are required to write a report based on a given case study of a media company.

For this report you will need to offer a series of recommendations for improving the performance of this company backed up by evidence gained from research into media production management. Your report needs to address the following areas:

- Analysing evidence taken from the case study, including financial/statistical information, highlight the key issues facing the company and offer suggestions for improvement. It is advised that you focus your suggestions in a few areas in order to achieve the appropriate depth rather than trying to draw parallels with every topic covered in the module.
- It is not enough to offer 'common sense' advice; you are required to use the work of experts in this area to back up your discussion.
- Appraise the potential for the company to exploit new opportunities in terms of entrepreneurship and in managing the career development of its staff.
- Make recommendations for how the changes that you are proposing may be 'rolled-out' within the company ('management of change').

Care should be taken in the structuring of your report in a professional manner. Your report should be written in the third person throughout and checked carefully for typographical errors (using a UK rather than USA setting for your spellchecker!). The use of direct quotes should be limited to particularly distinctive quotations and there should be no extended extracts from the work of others; in general extracts taken from sourced documents should be paraphrased.

All quotes whether direct or indirect should be referenced using the Harvard format Your work will be checked for plagiarism.

Minimum word count 3000 words / maximum word count 3500 words (main body of the text, this does not include title page, abstract, contents, appendices, references and bibliography). Marks will be deducted in the 'Fulfilment of assignment brief details, structure and referencing' section of the marking criteria if your report falls outside of this constraint. You should state your word count at the bottom of the contents page.

**Note – Wikipedia and similar user-edited sites should not be considered as reliable sources for research material although they can be a useful starting point if you explore the sources for each article and consider their credibility.**

**Your report should follow this template:**

### **Title Page**

- Title to be relevant and fairly brief
- Recipient of report
- Author of report
- Date of report.

## **Abstract**

- Also known as: Management Summary or Executive Summary.
- Points to Consider:
- Do not attempt to write your Executive Summary until the Report is finished
- Include brief outline of what it was that you set out to do  
Give a brief overview of what findings you made without going into a lot of detail as this is contained in the body of the Report
- State, briefly, what your conclusions are.

### **Remember:**

- Executive Summary must not be more than 1 page of A4 in length
- A reader should be able to read and make sense of it
- It must have a beginning, a middle and an end part.

## **Contents Page**

- List of Chapter Headings and Page Numbers
- If you have included any tables, diagrams or charts these are collated under a separate Contents Page called 'Table of Figures, etc.'
- Word count

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Brief introduction**

What is the purpose of this report?

**Aim/s**

This is what you hope to achieve (base on Assessment Brief details). Typically, a report such as this would have one aim.

### **Objectives**

How you go about achieving your aim (see [Bloom's Taxonomy](#) for useful synonyms). Objectives should be presented using bullet points (typically 4 – 6 objectives for a report such as this). For instance;

‘Objectives (to)

- Explore the ....
- Critique relevant.....

### **1.2 Background information**

This section should offer an overview of some key background information that anyone picking up this report should be aware of. This information should not go too far into a history lesson but should encapsulate any background material that helps with contextualisation but which not is covered in the more focused main body of the text. This short section should help to set the scene.

## **2. Review of Existing Knowledge / Literature Survey**

Critical evaluation of research material

You are required to carry out an information search and literature review, summarising key points and evaluating each piece of research data, commenting on its relevance and value to this report.

- Offer a synthesis of arguments, concepts and theories that relate to the subject of your report
- Give very brief summing up of the material - emphasis here is on critical analysis – for example - when was it written, who by, from what perspective, limitations of the research material, any political bias / vested interests etc. How important / relevant is this particular piece of information to your report?

- Try and integrate the various strands (rather than looking at each piece of research material in isolation), here's an example of the typical style (from a completely unrelated topic):

'The use of artificial neural networks for flood forecasting is an area which has yet to be fully explored. Up until now the majority of work in this area has been mainly theoretical; concentrating on neural network performance with artificially generated rainfall-runoff data; for example Minns and Hall (1996). However, these theoretical approaches tend to overlook the difficulty in converting and applying actual data to artificial network topologies. Smith and Jones (1999) go some way to address this criticism by applying neural networks to a small urban catchment area. However, their discussion is limited to the performance of a neural network on a small number of events.'

- As with elsewhere in your report, you are required to cite your sources using the Harvard System

Use direct and indirect (paraphrased but still cited) quotes to back up your points. Citing in your own words – e.g.

When discussing human needs Maslow's hierarchy of needs is still very relevant today (Cartwright, 2001).

Citing a direct quote – e.g.

Cartwright (2001) argues that belonging is a very important human need. He states that

'The punishment of 'sending people to Coventry' is a good example of how important it is for us to be accepted into the society within which we live or work – most people would find being a hermit very difficult. People, in fact, do need other people' (p.45)

In order for your report to have academic credibility it is crucial that you back up your points with evidence – it is not appropriate to simply offer unsubstantiated personal opinion. Use direct quotes sparingly, 10% at most.

- From reading your literature review it should be apparent that a systematic approach to the research has been taken
- Identify key writers and different points of view
- Use a variety of sources (magazines, books, specific websites etc)

### **3. Methodology**

A description of alternative approaches and justification for those selected. What methods might you employ were this a real case study? Justify your chosen approach to this fictitious case study. In this section you should discuss your approach to gathering research data along with any limitations and suggestions to overcome them.

### **4. Financial/Statistical Analysis**

An examination of the financial and statistical information given and the implications that can be drawn.

### **5. Discussion / Recommendations**

The main body of the report

### **6. Management of the Change Process**

Make recommendations for how the changes that you are proposing may be 'rolled-out' within the company.

### **7. Conclusions**

A short summary of the important findings which should be related back to the original aims and objectives.

## **8. References**

References refer to pieces of research material that you have actually used in your report. This includes material that you have directly quoted and material that you have indirectly quoted (paraphrased).

## **9. Bibliography**

Bibliographies are concerned with background reading and research, i.e. research material that has fed your knowledge of the subject but has not been directly used in your report.

For this assessment, you are required to use the Harvard Referencing Format, (Tip Sheet available in the Learning Centre) for both references and bibliography

eg:

Bigfoot B (2002) Proper Report Writing Skills. Peter Waterman Publishing, London.

Web-based reference sources need to be acknowledged, importantly, the date of access to the site needs to be given, eg. [www.website.info.com](http://www.website.info.com) (date accessed 21.01.06)

## **Appendices**

An Appendix contains supporting material which does not need to be read in the body of the Report. The number of words used in your Appendices does not contribute towards the word count of your Report.

Your appendix should not contain copies of all of the pieces of research material that you have gathered.

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## **Report Style**

The report should be written in an impersonalised style using the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

Take care with presentation - avoid 'widows and orphans' - words or short lines at the beginning or end of a paragraph, which are left dangling at the top or bottom of a column, separated from the rest of the paragraph.

### **Fonts and paragraphs and line spacing**

Aim to maintain a consistent approach throughout. Use Arial font size 11. Type to a left hand margin that is 35 mm wide to allow for binding. Use 1.5 lines spacing between lines and double spacing between paragraphs. Do not indent at the start of a paragraph. Type on one side of the page only.

### **Text headings**

Headings throughout the report should be consistent as follows:

- Chapter, or major headings, should be in capitals and centred on the line. Leave a space of two lines above such headings and one below.
- Section headings should be lower case with capital letters for the first letter of the first word, and placed at the left hand margin. Leave a space of two lines above such headings and one below.
- Sub-section headings can be introduced in italics, leaving a space above and below the heading.

<b>Assessment Criteria:</b>	
Highlighting of key issues (including drawing on financial/statistical information) facing the company.	30%
Suggestions for improvement and the management of change.	20%
Evidence of material drawn from research to back-up points made	30%
Structure, style and referencing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report should be written in the third person throughout.</li> <li>• Checked for typographical errors.</li> <li>• Appropriate use of direct / indirect quotes.</li> <li>• Appropriately structured, with relevant headings and sections.</li> <li>• Use of Harvard Format for referencing</li> </ul>	20%

**Table of Assessment Criteria and Associated Grading Criteria**

<b>Assessment Criteria →</b>	<b>Highlighting of key issues</b>	<b>Suggestions for improvement and the management of change.</b>	<b>Evidence of material drawn from research to back-up points made</b>	<b>Structure, style, referencing.</b>
<b>Weighting:</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.2</b>
<b>Grading Criteria</b> <b>0 – 29%</b>	Little or no demonstration of an appreciation of key issues facing the company. No attempt at quantitative numerical analysis	Little or no useful suggestions for improvement and the management of change.	Any suggestions that are made are not backed up with research material.	Serious shortcomings in areas such as style, language, readability and structure. No attempt at referencing.
<b>30 – 39%</b>	Vague appreciation of key issues facing the company. Poor attempt at quantitative numerical analysis	Vague suggestions for improvement and the management of change.	Little evidence that the suggestions that are made are backed up with research material.	Shortcomings in areas such as style, language, readability and structure. There may be an attempt at referencing although not following the Harvard format.
<b>40 – 49%</b>	Some appreciation of key issues facing the company. Adequate quantitative numerical analysis	Adequate suggestions for improvement and the management of change.	Adequate use of research material to back up points.	Issues in areas such as style, language, readability and structure but adequate overall. The report may not be straightforward to follow. A fair attempt at following the Harvard Format for referencing although there may be some errors.
<b>50 – 59%</b>	Appreciation of key issues facing the company. Fair attempt at quantitative numerical analysis	Some useful suggestions for improvement and the management of change.	Points are backed up with material drawn from research.	Report generally appropriate in style and language. There may be shortcomings in clarity of text and visual presentation. Referencing generally follows the Harvard Format although there may be a few minor errors.
<b>60 – 69%</b>	Good appreciation of key issues facing the company. Good attempt at quantitative numerical analysis	Good suggestions for improvement and the management of change.	Comments are backed up with well-chosen research material.	No significant shortcomings in structure. Style and language are appropriate, though there may be minor deficiencies. Referencing (following the Harvard Format) is appropriate throughout.
<b>70 - 79%</b>	Excellent, carefully considered guidance. Thorough quantitative numerical analysis	Well considered suggestions for improvement and the management of change.	Most points are backed up with well-chosen research material demonstrating a thorough approach to the task.	Presentation is clear and supported through the use of suitable visual techniques. Succinct style and language with no significant shortcomings. Referencing following the Harvard Format) is appropriate throughout.

<b>80 – 100%</b>	An exceptional piece of work, demonstrating a consistently astute approach. Thorough quantitative numerical analysis. Professionally presented, comprehensive guidance.	Carefully considered and insightful suggestions for the implantation of the change process.	Consistently thorough and focused approach to the gathering of a range of credible research material to back up your points.	Professional approach to the fulfilment of the requirements of the assignment brief details. The writing and presentation of the entire report is of a consistently succinct and very high standard, with no lapses in clarity. The text is well supported through the use of appropriate visual aids. Referencing following the Harvard Format) is appropriate throughout.
<b>Checklist</b>	Highlight the key issues facing the company which should include drawing on financial/statistical information.	Demonstrate business awareness in your suggestions for improvement.	Underpin your suggestions with evidence drawn from a range of credible research material.	Demonstrate that you can adopt a suitably academic writing style and have fulfilled all of the requirements of the brief.

### Workload:

Minimum word count 3000 words / maximum word count 3500 words (main body of the text, this does not include title page, abstract, contents, appendices, references and bibliography). Marks will be deducted in the 'Fulfilment of assignment brief details, structure and referencing' section of the marking criteria if your report falls outside of this constraint. You should state your word count at the bottom of the contents page.

The notional hours estimated to complete this assignment are 18.

### Feedback:

Marks and Feedback on your work will normally be provided within 20 working days of its submission deadline.