Writing better reports

Caroline Bradley

hqn TRAINING

1

Today

1. What are your readers' needs?
2. What do you need to achieve?
3. How do people take in information?







Find ways to work with people's brains

Clear principles

Apply to:
- ☑ words
- ☑ style
- ☑ structure
- ☑ summaries
- ☑ bullet points
- ☑ graphs, charts and tables

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2

What do reports do?

Provide information → organised format → specific readers → clear purpose





Make your report useful

Help readers to:
- ☑ make a decision
- ☑ be accountable
- ☑ understand risk/possibility

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3

Good reports are:

1. Clear and understandable	Straightforward and human, with an easy-to-follow structure.
2. Focused	The most important information is easy to find. No distraction from less important clutter.
3. Open and honest	They explain results and options – the good news and the bad
4. Interesting and engaging	They hold the reader's attention, because they meet the reader's needs

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4



Reporting is…more than sending information upwards

5



Who is your reader?

Be as clear as you can

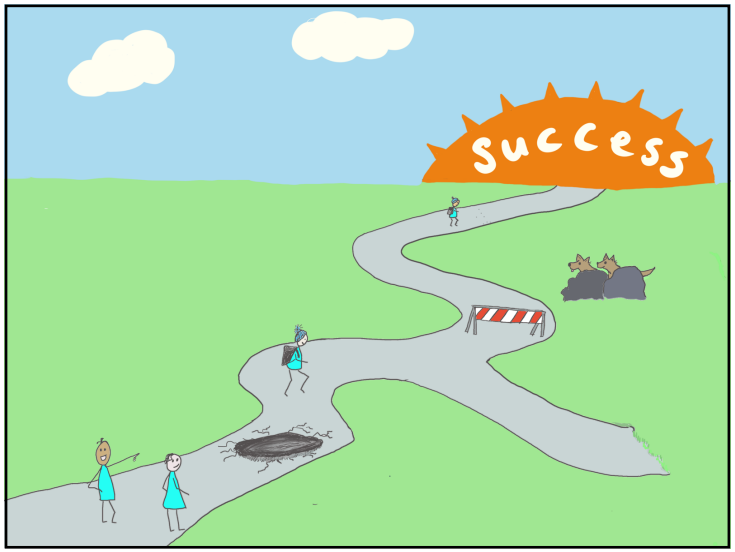
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What your reader needs

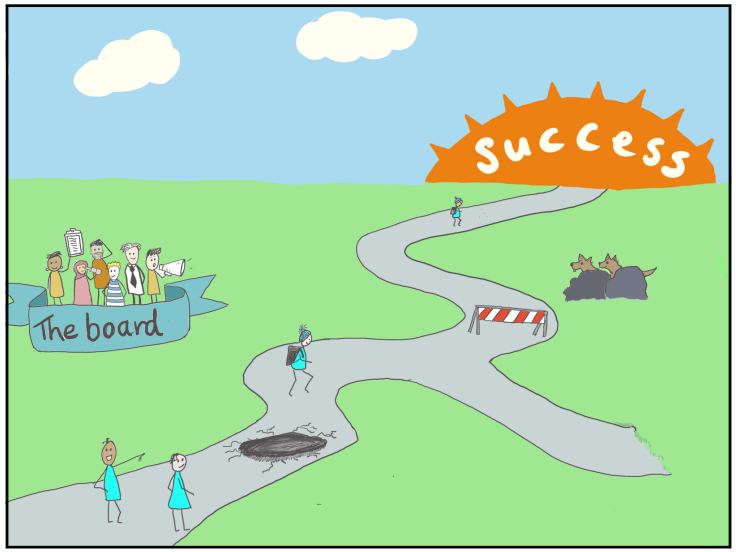
1. Who is my primary reader(s)?
2. What's their attitude towards the topic?
3. What do they want to know?
   At least three things.



7



8


success
The board

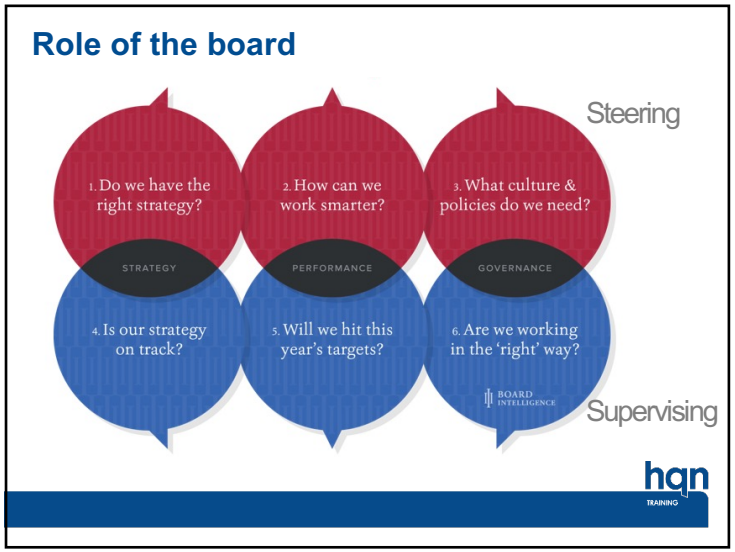
9


Less text
Focus on decision being asked to make
Less data
The board
TRAINING

10


Help us have good discussions!
Less text
Focus on decision being asked to make
Less data
The board
TRAINING

11


Role of the board
Steering
1. Do we have the right strategy?
2. How can we work smarter?
3. What culture & policies do we need?
STRATEGY
PERFORMANCE
GOVERNANCE
4. Is our strategy on track?
5. Will we hit this year's targets?
6. Are we working in the 'right' way?
BOARD INTELLIGENCE
Supervising
hqn
TRAINING

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You need to help your reader to understand:

Key issues?

Best actions?

What do they need to know?

What do they need to do?

Confident and assured decisions

13

Risk tolerance

Likelihood	Consequence /Impact
Rare	Insignificant
Unlikely	Minor
Possible	Moderate
Likely	Major
Almost Certain	Severe

They need your guidance



14

Questions your reader has about your report

1.	**Accurate?**	Can I trust the data?
2.	**Relevant?**	Does it cover the critical issues?
3.	**Up to date?**	Does it tell me what's going on?
4.	**Clear?**	Can I understand it quickly?
5.	**Future focused?**	Does it identify what can happen now?

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What is my goal?

Get clear about purpose before you write

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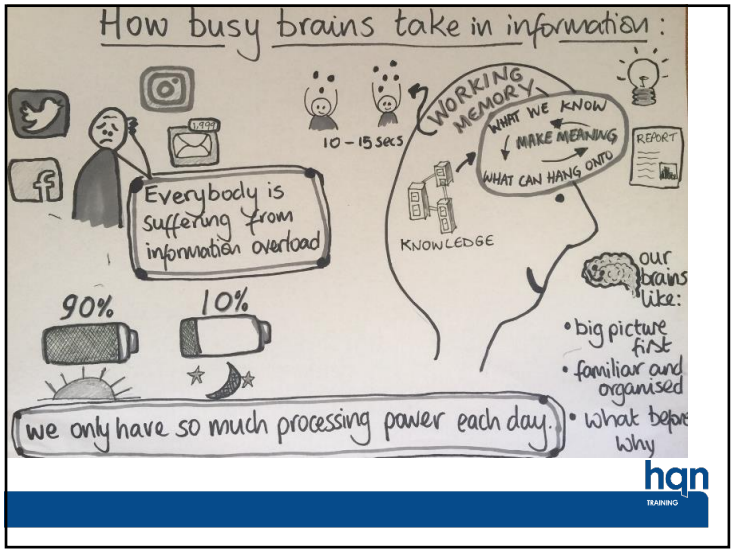
My purpose is…	so my reader will
Present the results of recent activities	Understand the progress or problems and…be reassured or make a decision.
Work out/explain which proposed option is best	Understand the criteria and make a good decision/support your proposal
To identify what needs to be done to improve this service	Understand what needs to be done, by who and when by to deliver a better service

So what? So what? So what?

Know? Feel? Do?

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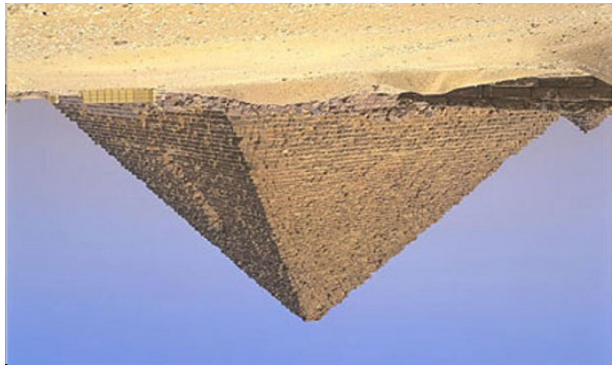
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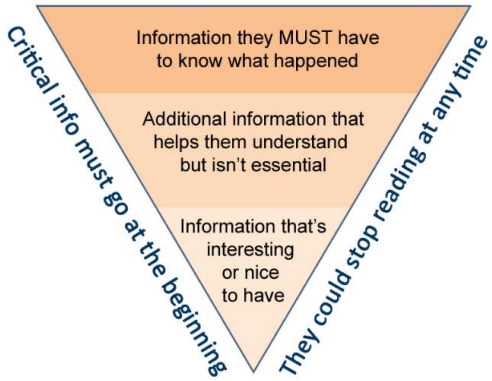


The inverted pyramid

Getting to the point

21

Inverted Pyramid News Writing



22


"All the News That's Fit to Print"

The New York Times

LATE CITY EDITION

VOL. CXVIII.... No. 40,321 NEW YORK, MONDAY, JULY 21, 1969 10 CENTS

MEN WALK ON MOON

ASTRONAUTS LAND ON A PLAIN AFTER STEERING PAST CRATER

Voice From Moon: 'Eagle Has Landed'

A Powdery Surface Found by Armstrong

By JOHN NOBLE WILFORD

23

Breaking news

Little Red Riding Hood lived in a house in the woods with her mum. One day she took a cake in her basket and set off into the trees to visit her Grandmother.

On the way she met a wolf. "Where are you going?" asked the wolf.

"I'm going to visit my Granny who lives in a little house behind those trees", explained Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf smiled, said goodbye and then ran off to Granny's house and ate her all up. He put on Granny's glasses and nightie and got into the bed.

Little Red Riding Hood came into the bedroom and said hello to the wolf, thinking it was her Grandma. Then she said, "Granny what big eyes you have."

"All the better to see you with," said the wolf.

"What big ears you have", said Little Red Riding Hood.

"All the better to hear you with," replied the wolf.

"And what big teeth you have!" exclaimed Little Red Riding Hood.

"All the better to eat you with!" shouted the wolf as he leapt out of the bed lunging for Little Red Riding Hood.

She dodged him and ran screaming into the woods. A woodcutter was nearby chopping down trees, he heard Little Red Riding Hood and ran after the wolf. The woodcutter was quite a sprinter and managed to catch the wolf and chop off his head. Little Red Riding Hood was traumatised, but thankful to be alive.

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Main message first – what before why

Owing to current budget issues, uncertainty about tenant participation and a change in legislation, **we recommend option one.**

We recommend option one because of:

- Current budget issues
- Uncertainty about tenant participation
- A change in legislation

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Main message first – what before why

In a recent survey over 50% of respondents ranked speed of response as the most important factor influencing whether they felt satisfied with our repairs service. Almost a quarter of respondents ranked it as the second most important factor. Taken together these figures reveal how important good response rates are for building and maintaining customer satisfaction levels.

Response rates have a significant impact on customer satisfaction levels. In a recent survey over 50% of respondents ranked speed of response as the most important factor influencing whether they felt satisfied with our repairs service. Almost a quarter of respondents ranked it as the second most important factor.

26

Main message first

We will do the work once – duplication of systems, processes and work should be avoided as wasteful and potential sources of conflict.

From a document about overarching leadership principles for a partnership.

27

Our brains prefer what before why

- Conclusions BEFORE details
- Solutions BEFORE problems
- Requests BEFORE reasons
- Answers BEFORE explanations



28

Reader-focused writing

- Helps readers grasp important information early
- And navigate easily



29

How much mental effort are you asking your reader to use?



State what they are, so people can
eel they have firm foundations and
oversight of everything they need.

30

Headings help understanding

External Environment

The external environment continues to be challenging for housing providers.

Potential hazards

Most potential hazards are preventable.

External environment continues to be challenging for housing providers

The main factors are…

Most potential hazards are preventable

Knowing what precautions to take is key to preventing harm at work.

31

Three types of heading

1. Topic Heading	Potential hazards
2. Question Heading	What are the potential hazards?
3. Statement Heading	Most potential hazards are preventable

32

Three types of heading

1. Topic Heading	Latest developments
2. Question Heading	How will recent changes affect tenants' rights?
3. Statement Heading	Recent changes will substantially affect tenants' rights

33

Before

Investors and lenders are more conscious and willing to appraise companies based on their ESG standards, with many feeling pressure to invest in sustainable businesses due to changing societal views on how businesses should operate. Thus, adopting ESG goals and implementing it into the organisation's strategy will also help with accessing capital. It is anticipated that our lenders will increasingly look for us to provide information about our performance in the areas of ESG in order to be better able to assess risk and opportunity for investment in environmentally friendly /carbon neutral projects.

After

- **ESG reporting is likely to make accessing capital easier -** investors and lenders are increasingly minded to use ESG standards when appraising companies to invest in.
- **Future lenders will want ESG performance information -** to help them identify opportunities to invest in environmentally friendly /carbon neutral projects.

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2. Early demolition - not a preferred option.

Main message

2.1 Early demolition brings risks and costs of site needing to be maintained before regeneration.

2.2 Later demolition (ie within the regeneration contract) minimises cost and safety concerns and enables wider environmental benefits.

Supporting details

2.1. Early demolition - risks and costs include:

a. Utility services may need to be altered to prevent disruption to the remaining homes on the surrounding estate

b. Longer need for site security hoardings and tree protection measures More site monitoring and management required to ensure safety, security and minimise any increased ecological risks.

2.2. Later demolition - benefits include:

a. It is more cost effective to remove the concrete super structure and foundation at the same time.

b. Demolition as part of regeneration needs fewer Anytown Council resources. Combining the two into a single procurement strategy means lower demand on development, procurement and legal teams

c. Combining the phases provides an opportunity to crush and recycle building materials into the new foundation (as part of the groundwork specification).

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Break time

36



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Writing

As easy as 1-2-3

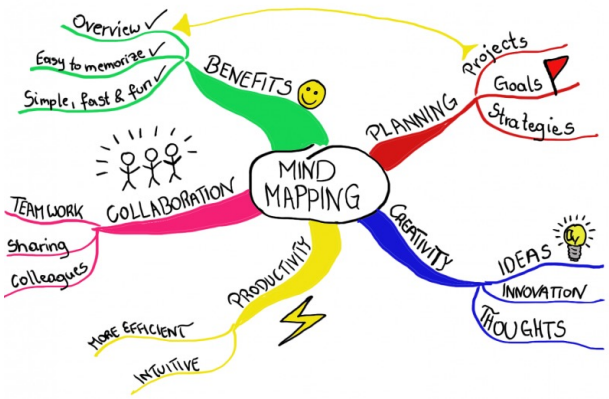
1. Think and plan
2. Write (first crap draft)
3. Revise



38

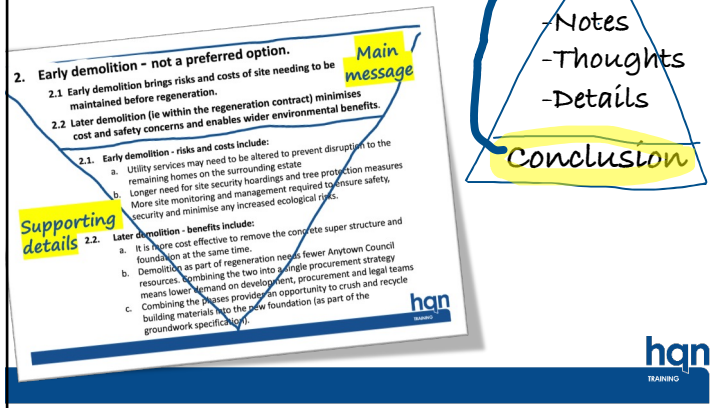


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40

Know your main messages BEFORE you write



41

		Key message 1 Main message first, supporting details below.	Key message 2 Main message first, supporting details below.	Key message 3 Main message first, supporting details below.
Purpose? Why are you writing it? What do you want the reader to know and do? Remember to use the "so what?" test.		Early demolition not top option - Costs - Risks Benefits of later demolition	Proposal – what is going to happen - Key stages	Who is doing what when Roles and responsibilities
Target audience? Who will read it? What understanding do they already have? What questions? What's most important to them?				
Context? What's the bigger picture? Does your audience understand it?				
Style, length and tone? Is there a set structure? Use clear sections with meaningful headings.				
Who else? Do you need to involve anyone else inside or outside of your organisation?				
When by? What's your deadline? Date for first crap draft? Date to review and improve it by?				

42

Reader's questions	Management report	Business case
Why am I reading this?	**What are we trying to achieve?** Link to strategy?	**What is the need and why now?** • What problem will it solve? • Any link to strategy? • What need from reader?
What do I need to know? 	**How are we performing against the plan? + or - ?** • What does this mean? • Are there opps or challenges? • Need to start or stop something?	**What is the proposal?** • What do and why? • What options considered? • Next steps
What do I need to do?	**Decision needed**	**Decision needed**

43

Write to inform – clarity impresses

1. Purpose of Report:

To update the board in relation to the successful completion of the 'Small Sites Study' that has recently been concluded by the appointed consultants Avison Young, with associated design and GIS input from Allies and Morrison.

28 words

This report contains a summary and the high level outputs in terms of site suitability and delivery potential for new homes across 91 individual council owned small sites. The full report from Avison Young and all associated documents is held on the Housing Delivery and Regeneration Board Sharepoint.

1. Purpose of Report:

To summarise a recent report of whether 91 council-owned small sites are appropriate for housing development.

17 words

The full 'Small Sites Study' and associated documents is on the Housing Delivery and Regeneration Board Sharepoint. The study by Avison Young (appointed consultants) was concluded on 25.1.22.

44

Creates understanding
Helps readers to grasp the ideas

Creates connection

…to be clear

Have the courage to be plain…
be confident of what you have to say

Informs and persuades

45



46



47

Plain language helps your reader to

1. Find
   what they need

2. Understand
   the information the first time they read or hear it



3. Use
   the information to meet their needs

48

Plain English

- Uses words well – thinks about the readers needs
- Human and direct tone
- Delivers information effectively



49

Choose Plain words

1. Request
2. Endeavour
3. Assist
4. Commence
5. Obtain
6. Prior to
7. Verify
8. Terminate
9. Additional
10. Dwelling
11. Notwithstanding
12. A lack of operative resource within the team.

50

Avoid jargon – find a plainer alternative

1. Works
2. Operative
3. Void
4. Job has been raised
5. Rechargeable repairs

51

What's the best way to choose the right words?

1. Use a thesaurus to choose a variety of words to spice things up.
2. Show how fancy you are by using the word with the most syllables.
3. Use Latin or legalese to show you've been to university.
4. Go for a familiar, everyday word with a precise meaning.

52

Plain English – concentrate on three things

1. Plainer words and shorter sentences
2. Active, lively language
3. Most important info first
   organise it to create understanding



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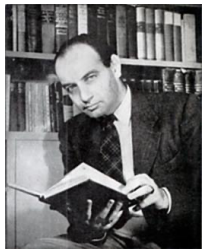
Long sentences

If sentences are long and contain too many different points, perhaps because they introduce new ideas before they have properly dealt with the ones they started with, they take more time and attention to read and are likely to lose the reader's attention. **(43 words)**

54

Sentence length matters

Number of words	Percentage of readers who understand it
30+ words	5%
17-19 words	75%
7 or fewer	95%



Rudolf Flesch (1911-1986)

55



One sentence = one idea

56

Shorter sentences are easier to process

Aim for an average of

15 to 20 words per sentence.



Around 25 is the limit.

57

Select and organise - answer reader's questions

1. Purpose of Report:

To update the board in relation to the successful completion of the 'Small Sites Study' that has recently been concluded by the appointed consultants Avison Young, with associated design and GIS input from Allies and Morrison. (36 words)

This report contains a summary and the high level outputs in terms of site suitability and delivery potential for new homes across 91 individual council owned small sites. The full report from Avison Young and all associated documents is held on the Housing Delivery and Regeneration Board Sharepoint. (28 + 20 words)

1. Purpose of Report:

To summarise a recent report of whether 91 council-owned small sites are appropriate for housing development. (16 words)

The full 'Small Sites Study' and associated documents is on the Housing Delivery and Regeneration Board Sharepoint. The study by Avison Young (appointed consultants) was concluded on 25.1.22. (17 + 11)

Half as many words

58

Go chunky

A scheme will be drawn up and submitted for planning approval, based on a mixed-tenure development of affordable rent developed in line with age friendly principles together with shared ownership homes.

A scheme will be drawn up and submitted for planning approval.

It will be a mixed-tenure development of affordable rent and shared ownership homes.

All of the properties will be designed to be age-friendly.

59

What is a professional tone?

Professionals do things well

- Clear
- Concise
- Meets readers' needs



- Ask yourself "what would I say?"
- Use familiar words
- Be precise – organise the ideas

60

Active language is easier to grasp

Passive	Active (the doer first)
The doors will be mended by the contractor on Friday.	The contractor will mend the doors on Friday.
The decision was made to phase out that way of paying the charge.	We have phased out that way of paying the charge.

61

Use familiar words in familiar ways

The order in which repairs in the block will be carried out will depend upon an evaluation carried out by contractors when works commence.

Put the "doer" first (=active language)

The contractors will decide the best order to carry out the repairs in the block.

Start with who is doing what

62

Verbs are powerful

Keep your doing words DOING

In the interest of the cost reduction exercise an agreement was reached to…



Words ending in:
- -ion
- -ment
- -ance

Turns verbs into nouns

To reduce costs we agreed to…
First person

To reduce costs it was agreed that…
Third person

Active is always shorter too!

63

Before	After (strong verb)
We made an application	We applied
We will give consideration to	We will consider
We will make an assessment of	We will assess
Offer reassurance	Reassure
Make/take/reach a decision	Decide
Will be conducting an investigation	Will investigate



64

Don’t string more than three nouns together

Lone worker safety protection procedures development

Developing procedures to protect the safety of lone workers ✓

Staff will attend a workplace conflict management course

Staff will attend a course for managing conflict at work ✓





Keep your doing words DOING

65

Writing in the third person

First person:	• I think it is vital to… • We will need to…	Personal narrative
Second person:	• You think it is vital to… • You will need to…	
Third person:	• They think it is vital to… • She will need to… • The team will begin to…	More removed

66

Write reports in a neutral tone

Third person: This report evaluates three options for improving how quickly we respond to complaints.

Collective first person: In this report **we** evaluate three options for improving how quickly we respond to complaints

We reclassified the complaints and found that...

We redesigned the feedback form...

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3. Presenting a report

Mostly it’s common sense

3.1 Informative headings

Help stop the reader from getting lost

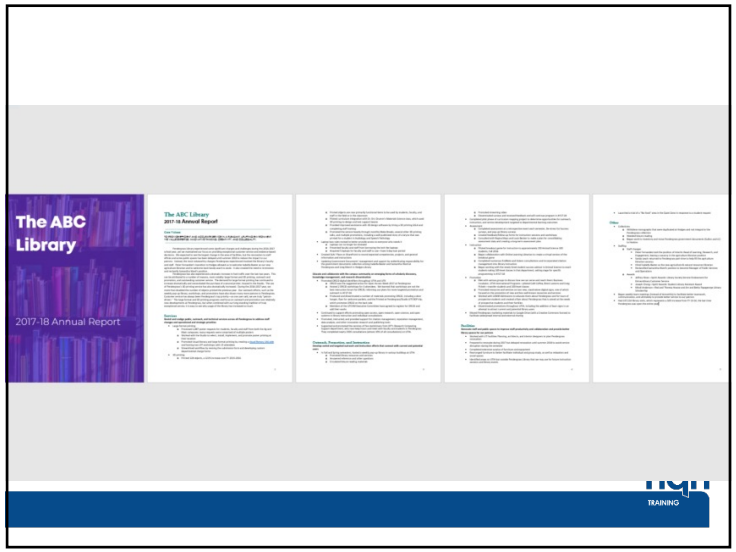
3.2 Our brains understand hierarchy

Use it to organise your messages

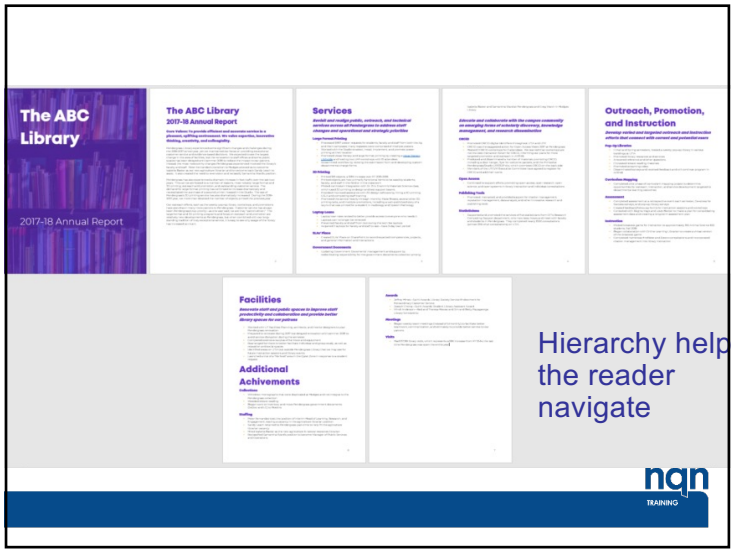
(a) and details

(i) but don’t use more than three tiers

68



69



70

For the school trip next Thursday, children will need to bring:

- Waterproof jacket (in case of rain)
- Packed lunch and a drink
- Notebook and pen
- Walking boots or wellies

71

- % Satisfied with Repairs – all Regions have failed to meet this KPI and the following actions are being taken:
  - ANE – regular engagement and assessment of the dissatisfied residents is in place and over the coming months the scrutiny linked to performance will increase with the appointment of Nigel Notreal (see section 3 of this report)
  - ANW – performance in this area continues to improve owed to the close monitoring and interaction with the contractor to ensure dissatisfaction issues are not repeated
  - AYH - failing marginally, continue to assess dissatisfaction and satisfaction trends and build on positive performance
  - AN – this KPI has improved over the last 3 months and continues to do so
  - AS - working with incumbent contractors to understand and subsequently improve satisfaction levels with reactive repair and gas repair contractors
- No. Average Days – performance is strong in four of five regions with AYH marginally behind target and AN well behind target. The following actions are being taken:
  - AN – we have analysed the routine orders completed by Foster's; in a number of areas they have administratively completed the repairs incorrectly which has led to them being closed after the actual completion date and after the target completion date. This is being targeted this month with Foster's as a matter of urgency
- Void Construction Period – each region is working closely with internal (Housing teams) and external colleagues (contractors) to ensure void turnaround is improved where possible and relet priorities are considered to ensure a targeted approach.

72

The audits removed from the proposed plan are as follows:

- VFM
- Workforce planning
- Choice Based Lettings
- Universal Credits
- Cyclical H&S: Gas servicing, asbestos, fire safety (Corporate H&S still covered)
- Communications and marketing
- Complaints
- Tenant engagement
- HR effectiveness
- Aids and adaptations

73

The audits removed from the proposed plan are:

Customer focused:

1. Choice Based Lettings
2. Universal Credits
3. Complaints
4. Aids and adaptations
5. Tenant engagement

Cyclical health and safety:

1. Gas servicing
2. Asbestos
3. Fire safety

Corporate focused:

1. HR effectiveness
2. VFM
3. Workforce planning
4. Communications and marketing

74

For the school trip next Thursday children will need to bring:

1. Waterproof jacket (in case of rain)
2. Packed lunch and a drink
3. Notebook and pen
4. Walking boots or wellies

75

Use bullets well

1. Keep content short
2. Avoid long lists of them
3. Sort into logical order/groups/themes
4. Number them – more memorable

76

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Growth Committee on progress on the Central Town regeneration, namely: rehousing update and next steps, progress on land assembly, Waverley Bank investment options and outline key activity in the coming months.

Purpose

An update on:

1. Rehousing and next steps
2. Land assembly
3. Waverley Bank investment options
4. Key activities in the next few months

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Audits removed from the proposed plan:

Tenant focused

1. Choice Based Lettings
2. Universal Credits
3. Complaints
4. Aids and adaptations
5. Tenant engagement

Cyclical health and safety

1. Gas servicing
2. Asbestos
3. Fire safety

Corporate focused

1. HR effectiveness
2. VFM
3. Workforce planning
4. Communications and

78

2. Early demolition - not a preferred option.

2.1 Early demolition brings risks and costs of site needing to be maintained before regeneration.

2.2 Later demolition (ie within the regeneration contract) minimises cost and safety concerns and enables wider environmental benefits.

2.1. Early demolition - risks and costs include:

a. Utility services may need to be altered to prevent disruption to the remaining homes on the surrounding estate
b. Longer need for site security hoardings and tree protection measures
c. More site monitoring and management required to ensure safety, security and minimise any increased ecological risks.

2.2. Later demolition - benefits include:

a. It is more cost effective to remove the concrete super structure and foundation at the same time.
b. Demolition as part of regeneration needs fewer Anytown Council resources. Combining the two into a single procurement strategy means lower demand on development, procurement and legal teams
c. Combining the phases provides an opportunity to crush and recycle building materials into the new foundation (as part of the groundwork specification).

79

2.1 Early demolition - not a preferred option.

Early demolition brings risks and costs of site needing to be maintained before regeneration.	1. Utility services may need to be altered to prevent disruption to the remaining homes on the surrounding estate 2. Longer need for site security hoardings and tree protection measures 3. More site monitoring and management required to ensure safety, security and minimise any increased ecological risks.
Later demolition (ie within the regeneration contract) minimises cost and safety concerns and enables wider environmental benefits	1. It is more cost effective to remove the concrete super structure and foundation at the same time. 2. Demolition as part of regeneration needs fewer Anytown Council resources. Combining the two into a single procurement strategy means lower demand on development, procurement and legal teams 3. Combining the phases provides an opportunity to crush and recycle building materials into the new foundation (as part of the groundwork specification).

80

Since the last development update at the end of the previous quarter, October –December 2021 has seen 16 affordable rent units and 16 shared ownership units completed at Bellridge.

32 units completed at Bellridge (Oct – Dec 2021):

- 16 affordable rent
- 16 shared ownership

32 units completed at Bellridge
(Oct – Dec 2021)

- 16 affordable rent
- 16 shared ownership

81

Review of the use of neighbourhood office

The findings from the review are as follows:

- Out of 100 local respondents to a survey, 72 said our service was “patchy” and “unreliable”
- 65 out of 100 people surveyed were happy to use the app or customer service helpline to ask for support or advice
- The location of the office was not popular with potential users. It is not on a natural pedestrian route. Footfall has reduced by around 5% every two months in the last year
- After considering the above factors it is recommended that we close the neighbourhood office

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Review reveals strong case to close the neighbourhood office

Service not seen as reliable	72 out of 100 locals surveyed said the service was “patchy” and “unreliable”
Alternatives are well used	65 of the 100 people surveyed were happy to use the app or customer service helpline to ask for support or advice.
Office location not popular	The office is not on a natural pedestrian route. Footfall has reduced by around 5% every two months in the last year.

83

Words in tables

Segment, order, edit down.	Create a logical group or hierarchy. Get rid of the excess.
Conclusion to the left	Usually your final point. Think short and punchy.
Details to the right	What do they need to know? A chance to show your clear thinking.

84

Words in Tables makes text easier to digest

External environment

The external environment continues to be challenging for housing providers. The sector is still feeling the affects of the 2009 economic downturn which led to austerity, especially in the public sector. In more recent years, the changing political outlook has greatly impacted on our customers, with welfare reform, universal credit and benefit caps. Furthermore, potentially significant changes in the lead up to and after Brexit have led to a future that is unclear and uncertain in terms of impact it might have on the housing market. These changes are in addition to existing long term challenges, such as land availability, an ageing population and an under supply of homes. In addition, post Grenfell, there has been a move to a more customer focused regulatory environment especially around building safety, that will have an impact upon new build quality standards.

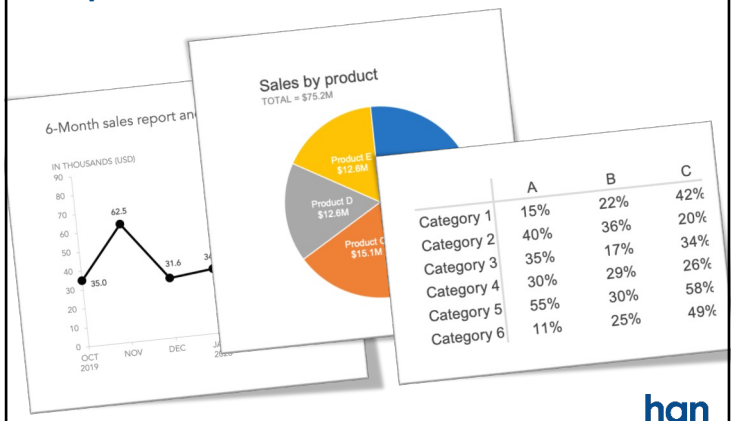
85

Challenging external environment for housing providers

Ongoing impact of austerity on public sector and customers	The 2009 economic downturn has reduced budgets and led to welfare reform, universal credit and benefit caps
Brexit uncertainty	As yet unclear impact on housing market
Post-Grenfell regulatory changes	Changes to new build quality standards
Longer term challenges	1. Land availability 2. Ageing population 3. Under-supply of homes

86

Graphs, charts and tables

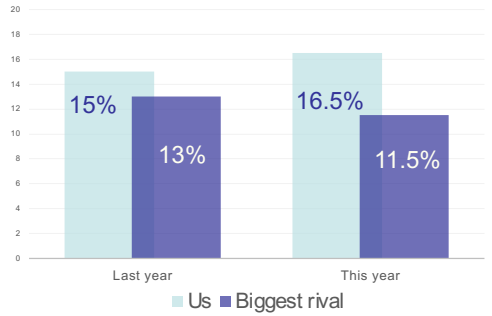


87

What is the message/info here?

Figure 1

Market share



88

Graphs, charts and tables

"We took 1.5% market share from our biggest rival."



Sometimes words say it better.



hqn TRAINING

89

1.5% market share

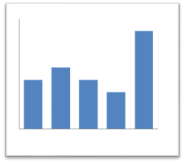
Taken from our nearest rivals last year

Think about using typographical design to make an impact

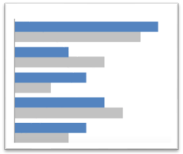
hqn TRAINING

90

Bar charts



Vertical bar chart



Clustered bars



Stacked bars



100% stacked bars

hqn TRAINING

91

Bar charts

Easy to label directly



Hard to label directly

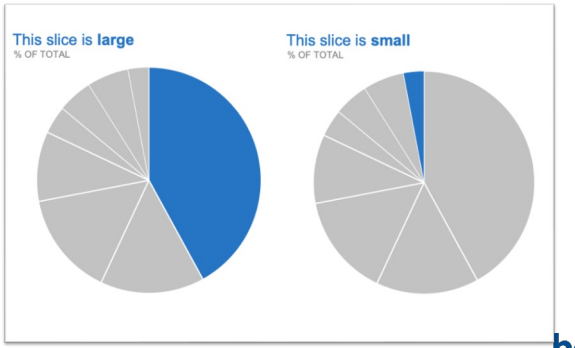


hqn TRAINING

92

Pie charts

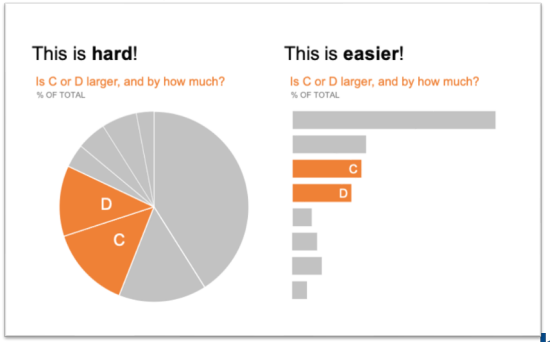
Helpful for relationship of part to whole



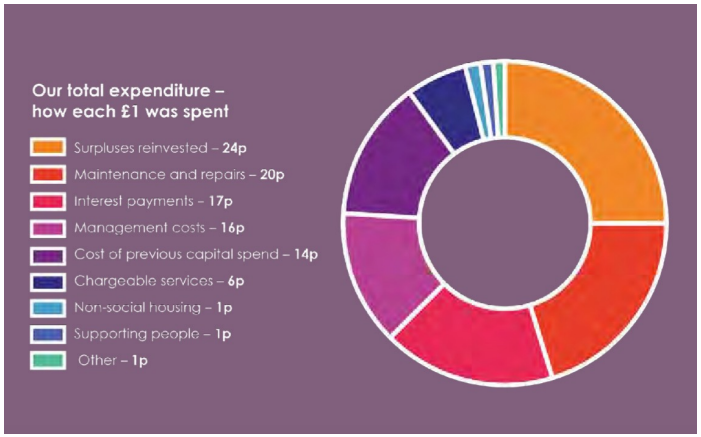
93

Pie charts

Often not easy to compare amounts

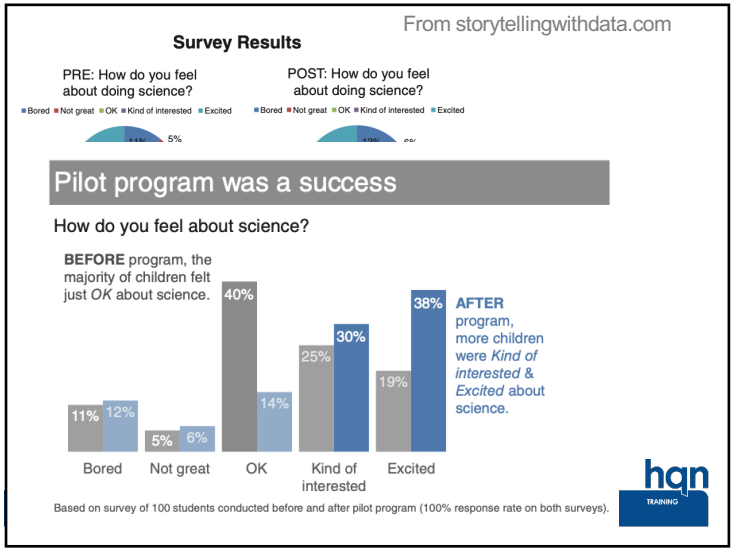


94



95

From storytellingwithdata.com



96

What do graphs and charts do?

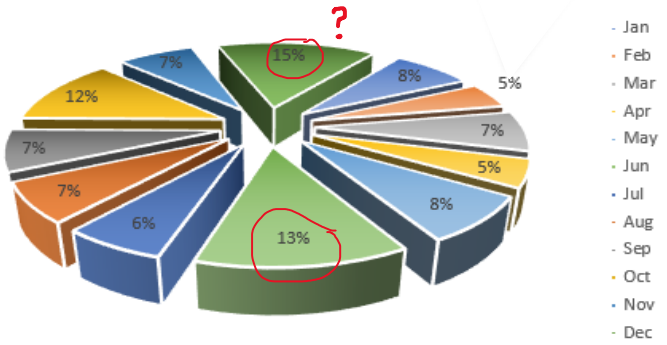
1. See the big picture
2. Easily compare values
3. See patterns among values
4. Compare patterns



Choose wisely - think about the understanding you are trying to create…

Good advice at storytellingwithdata.com

97



Don't use 3D – it just gives busy brains more to process

98

Tables

Use white space or bold to guide people's eyes

Staff	2016	Diff
Neighbourhoods	27	15
Maintenance	112	10
Leasehold	94	8
Learning and development	22	7
Debt recovery	15	5
Feedback	24	2
Total	**294**	**47**

99

Liverpool set the pace in the most competitive season for years

Premier league table 2016/17

		Pts	Pld	W	D	L	F	A	GD
1	Liverpool	26	11	8	2	1	30	14	16
2	Chelsea	25	11	8	1	2	26	9	17
3	Man City	24	11	7	3	1	25	10	15
4	Arsenal	24	11	7	3	1	24	11	13
5	Spurs	21	11	5	6	0	15	6	9

Put most important info/column next to label

100

Tables

Remove unnecessary borders or shading

Heavy borders

Group	Metric A	Metric B	Metric C
Group 1	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 2	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 3	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 4	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 5	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ

Light borders

Group	Metric A	Metric B	Metric C
Group 1	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 2	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 3	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 4	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 5	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ

Minimal borders

Group	Metric A	Metric B	Metric C
Group 1	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 2	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 3	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 4	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ
Group 5	$X.X	Y%	Z,ZZZ



It creates background noise – gets in the way of the data

101

Staff	2016	Diff
Leasehold	94	8
Maintenance	112	10
Learning & development	22	7
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102

How the Regulator of Social Housing (England) presents tables

Table 3: VfM metric quartile data (Source: FVA and SDR 2015-2017)

New supply (social) includes the following types of social housing units only - social rent general needs housing (excluding Affordable Rent), Affordable Rent general needs housing, social rent supported housing and housing for older people (excluding Affordable Rent), Affordable Rent supported housing and housing for older people, Low Cost Home Ownership, care homes, other social housing units and social leasehold.

VfM metric		Reinvestment	New supply (social)	New supply (non-social)	Gearing	EBITDA MRI interest cover	Headline social housing CPU (£'000)	Op Margin (social)	Op Margin (overall)	ROCE
Upper quartile	2017	8.6%	2.2%	0.03%	54.8%	278%	£4.36	39.3%	36%	5.6%
	2016	8.2%	2.2%	N/A	57%	242%	£4.55	36.7%	33.6%	5.5%
	2015	N/A	2.7%	N/A	51.1%	234%	£4.51	37.5%	33%	N/A
Median	2017	5.6%	1.2%	0.00%	43.4%	212%	£3.29	34.7%	31.4%	4.3%
	2016	5.7%	1.2%	N/A	44.7%	177%	£3.60	32.1%	28.2%	4.1%
	2015	N/A	1.5%	N/A	42%	170%	£3.65	30.8%	27.5%	N/A
Lower quartile	2017	3.7%	0.4%	0.00%	33.5%	174%	£2.96	28.7%	25%	3.5%
	2016	3.8%	0.5%	N/A	33.4%	133%	£3.24	25.5%	22.6%	3.3%
	2015	N/A	0.6%	N/A	30.9%	129%	£3.19	25.4%	22.2%	N/A
Weighted Average (Mean)	2017	7.3%	1.5%	0.22%	45.8%	169%	£3.78	34.3%	29.7%	4.3%
	2016	5.7%	1.6%	N/A	45.4%	170%	£4.05	32.1%	27.7%	4.2%
	2015	N/A	1.9%	N/A	41.8%	158%	£4.04	31.6%	27.3%	N/A

103

Total grant spend by London Borough

September 1995 - March 2011

Borough	Trust rank	Index rank	Number of grants	Amount approved (£)
Tower Hamlets	1	3	269	9,692,562
Hackney	2	2	225	7,869,676
Southwark	3	12	232	7,298,118
Camden	4	14	136	6,140,419
Islington	5	4	156	5,424,337
Lambeth	6	8	156	5,287,841
Newham	7	2	154	5,217,975
Hammersmith and Fulham	8	13	109	4,085,708
Merton	9	29	113	3,698,112
Croydon	10	20	127	3,630,065
Lewisham	11	9	144	3,557,069
Westminster	12	17	100	3,397,911
Ealing	13	15	84	3,057,729
Bromley	14	30	131	3,008,414
Kensington and Chelsea	15	19	74	2,979,468
Brent	16	11	85	2,858,224
Greenwich	17	10	87	2,787,682
Barnet	18	24	99	2,706,587
Wandsworth	19	21	89	2,609,453
Waltham Forest	20	5	131	2,606,210
Sutton	21	28	87	2,469,911
Hounslow	22	18	75	2,353,353
Haringey	23	7	101	2,350,257
Redbridge	24	22	75	2,206,110
Rechmond upon Thames	25	33	133	2,204,961
Hullingdon	26	23	103	2,141,460
Enfield	27	16	86	2,140,890
Barking and Dagenham	28	6	68	1,984,150
Havering	29	25	95	1,941,470
Bexley	30	26	103	1,891,120
Harrow	31	27	62	1,431,193
Kingston upon Thames	32	31	55	1,350,135
City of London	33	32	11	88,000
Several Additional Inner Bouroughs			481	18,704,677
Several Additional Outer Boroughs			164	6,392,100
Other			566	28,566,830
London-wide			1,214	86,583,750
Total			**6,180**	**252,883,123**

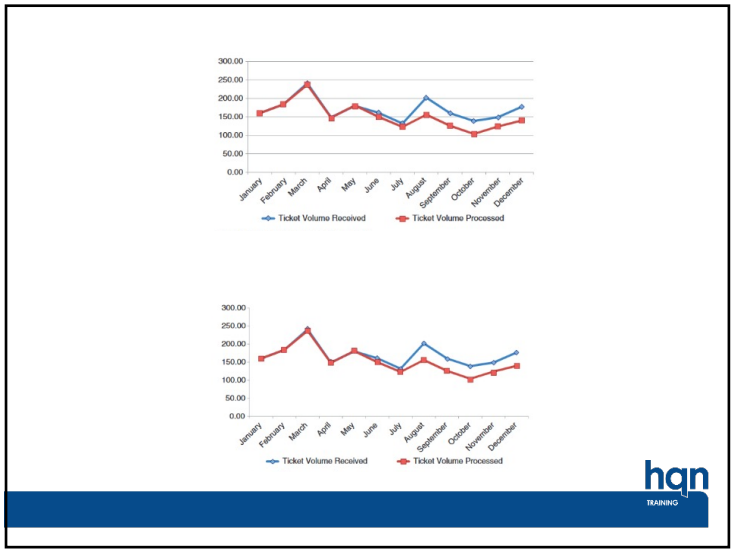
A "grable"?

From storytellingwithdata.com

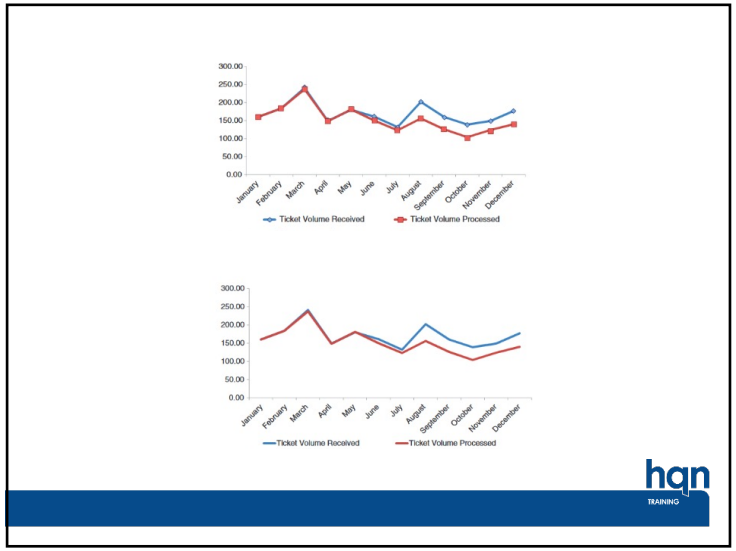
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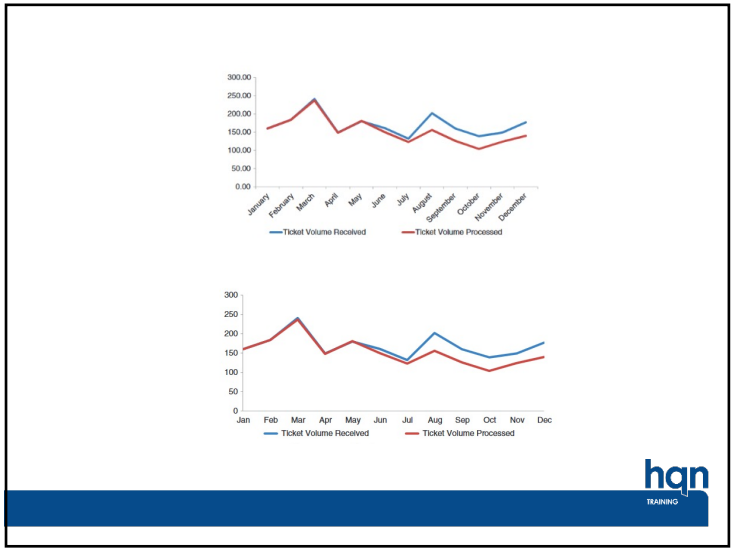
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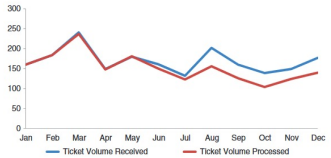
106

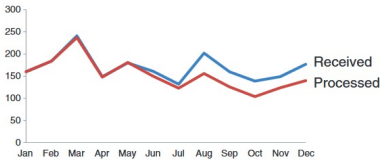


107



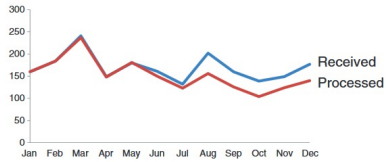
108



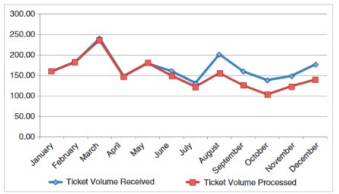


109

Reduce your data to ink ratio



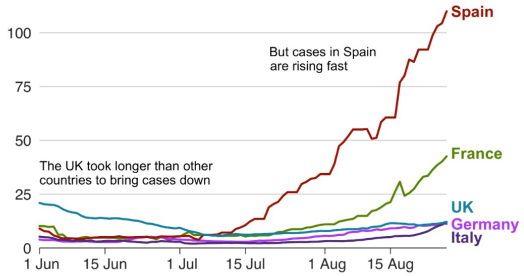
Cut out background noise



110

UK infection rates relatively low

Total cases per 100,000 people by week up to 27 August

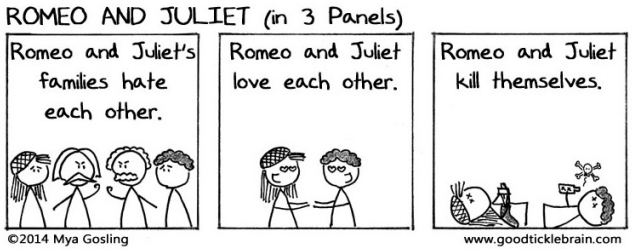


Note: Countries do not always release figures every day, which may explain some of the sharp changes in the trendlines

Source: ECDC, data to 27 Aug

BBC

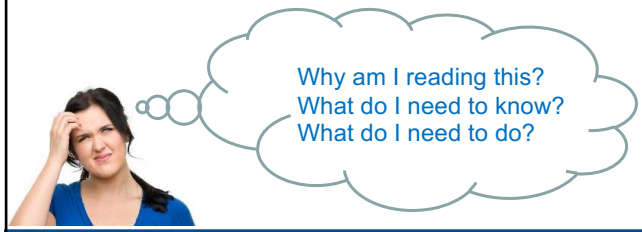
111



112

A good summary will

1. Be able to stand alone
2. Tells reader what document is about
3. Summarises reasons for the recommendation
4. Indicates depth of discussion



113

REPORT TO LEAD MEMBER BRIEFING

PLANNING

Not a good summary... really just a description

TITLE OF REPORT: TRAVELLERS AND THE USE OF UNATHORISED SITES WITHIN THE CITY

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report gives some background to the recent problems experienced with unauthorised use of land within the City as temporary traveller residential sites

1.2 It also raises some points for further consideration and suggests a way to deal with such problems in future.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Property Services has had the responsibility for clearing travellers from Council owned sites for many years. This process involves serving a "Direction" under s.77 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 – which requests the travellers to move off the site.

2.2 Legal Services apply for a hearing at the Magistrates Court . A summons is served. We attend court to apply for a court order. If this is granted we then have to arrange

114

REPORT TO LEAD MEMBER BRIEFING
PLANNING

TITLE OF REPORT: TRAVELLERS AND THE USE OF UNATHORISED SITES WITHIN THE CITY

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 Our established process for removing travellers from unauthorised land has come under stress due to an increase in incidents – from four per year to 11.

1.2 A trial of using a contractor to evict travellers using common law powers has been successful.

1.3 The trial used a process that meets government advice on how councils should deal with travellers (Govt. Circular 18/94)

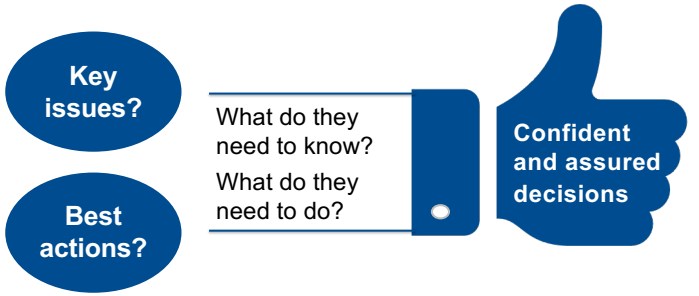
1.4 Other factors considered include cost, responding to the welfare needs of travellers and levels of support available from the police.

1.5 The recommendation is to authorise a service level agreement with Uniqwin UK Ltd to provide a service to handle future cases of traveller eviction.

Summarises the main points
Answers readers three questions

115

You need to help your reader to understand:



116

Executive summary

Needs to answer three questions:

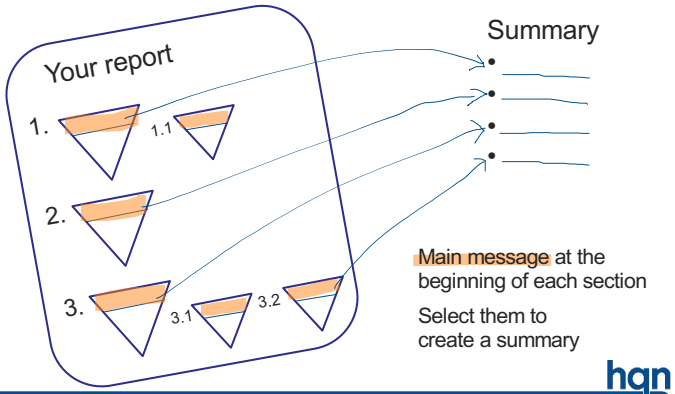
1. Why am I reading this?
2. What do I need to know?
3. What do I need to do?

A helpful shortcut to a summary is to jot down up to three things for each question

117

Executive summary

Using the inverted pyramid helps you summarise



Main message at the beginning of each section

Select them to create a summary

118

Recommendations – are about future actions

Be clear and definite:

1. Use the "imperative mood"
   - **Present tense:** We suggest continuing with the next phase of HR expansion.
   - **Imperative:** Continue with the next phase of HR expansion.



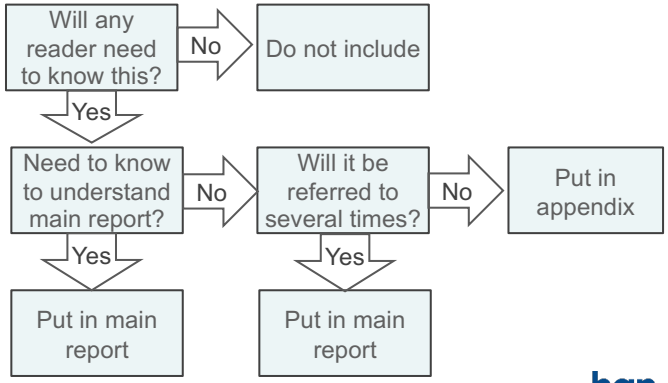
2. Don't use qualifiers
   - **With qualifiers:** *If at all possible*, incorporating financial monitoring will *likely* improve quarterly results.
   - **Without:** Incorporating financial monitoring will improve quarterly results

119



120

Main report or appendix?



121



"Your report is organized, concise and error-free...have you been monotasking again?"

122

Writing

As easy as 1-2-3

1. Think and plan
2. Write (first crap draft)
3. Revise



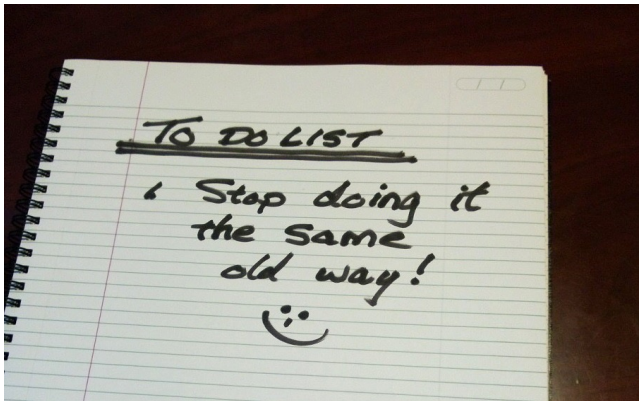
123

Revising

1. Edit/revise in the morning
2. Print things out
3. Change the font
4. Read in the wrong order
5. Read out loud



124



125

Summary

Find your message	What your reader needs to know and what you need to achieve. Think and plan first.
Find your structure	Bring your key messages to the top, support them with well organised sections. Use headings well, graphs and tables when they help.
Find your voice	Use active, everyday language. Be clear and direct.

126



Thank you

caroline@communicatingbrilliantly.co.uk

127

Using number in text

- Write out numbers under 10 (ie one to nine).
- Use numerals for 10 and over unless beginning a sentence

128

Using number in text ...(cont'd)

- Use numerals for ages and percentages
  - 62 per cent of eight year-olds like going to school
- And for dates, ratios and monetary amounts:
  - On 14 February the odds on receiving a gift worth over £5 are 2-to-1

129

Capital letters slow down reading by?

1. 5%
2. 20%
3. 40%

When in doubt leave them out

130

Capital letters

There are many associations and Rosebery Housing Association is one of them.

Many chief executives were present, including Deborah Pike, Chief Executive of Rosebery Housing Association.

The chief executive is Deborah Pike

131

Capital letters ...(cont'd)

Our Business Planning Cycle is key to ensuring that VfM is embedded in all of the activities we undertake.

Our business planning cycle can help us build value for money (VfM) into everything we do.

132

Capital letters ...(cont'd)

Case Study 1

Best Value Performance Indicators

Case study one

Best value performance indicators

hqn TRAINING

133