

8

PRODUCING EFFECTIVE DELIVERABLES

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DELIVERING THE DELIVERABLES

Deliverables are the product and outcome of data gathering and analysis. These outputs represent a condensed form of your hard work and insight, and can take many forms, including essays, reports, policy papers and presentations. Deliverables vary by type, use and audience, but can be broadly divided between academic and professional outputs.

Academic outputs are written in ‘journal’ style. They vary greatly in terms of length (from 3,000 words for a journal article or edited book chapter to 150,000 words for a monograph/book). However, they all present a central thesis (argument or hypothesis) regarding a gap in knowledge for a small audience. This audience is generally assumed to be well-versed in the discipline.

Professional outputs tend to be presented in ‘report’ form and center around recommendations and actions to meet a particular problem or challenge. These deliverables have shorter, more standardized templates, that can be quite distinct from academic expectations.

Indeed, entire sections that are of paramount importance in academic outputs (such as the methods section) may be relegated to the appendix in a professional report. Other sections, such as action plans and implementation, may not be included in academic essays. The audience of professional reports is usually not a small group of experts, but a wider audience of generalists and stakeholders. Table 8.1 summarizes some of the important distinctions:

Table 8.1 Differences between academic and professional outputs

	Academic essay	Professional report
Main point	Thesis Argument	Recommendation Action plans
Purpose	Inform	Persuade
Content	Theory generation Theory testing	Problem-solving Action-oriented
Audience	Experts	Generalists
Dissemination	Publishing	Circulation
Readership	Limited	Typically larger (including general public)

Of course there are some deliverables that bridge the gap. Consultancy work is often produced by academic researchers commissioned by government agencies and private industry. These outputs tend to follow a report-based structure, while drawing heavily on academic rigor and research conventions. Other forms of research dissemination such as op-eds or community presentations may take a hybrid form of informing, illuminating and recommending certain courses of action.

Regardless of template, we would argue that small-scale applied workplace-based research should be:

1. *Problem-focused* – Policy reports tend to be problem-focused, exploring the dimensions and impact of a particular issue. The scope is limited and practical.
2. *Analysis-driven* – Possible solutions for any given problem are diverse and involve trade-offs. Policy papers analyze different options, taking into account the impact and feasibility of alternative policies by looking at the potential costs, benefits and impacts for different stakeholder groups.
3. *Evidence-based* – To convince decision-makers, ideas must be demonstrably well founded. Evidence could involve primary data, case comparisons and/or effects of inactions or policies taken in other contexts/environments on this issue.
4. *Offers viable recommendations* – Policy papers are action-oriented. The goal of a policy paper is to persuade a decision-maker to address a specific issue and implement the recommendation devised. To be practical and actionable, recommendations should also demonstrate contextual awareness, and link to win–win outcomes.

That said, deliverables must address the needs and expectations of the audience. This means you may need to produce both a research report for your academic institution and a professional report for your organization. This chapter detangles the differences, so you leverage your research project to produce both academic and professional outputs.

WRITING FOR VARIED AUDIENCES

The first rule of writing is to *know your audience*. For academic work, that is generally your professors and your supervisor. These individuals are intimately familiar with your topic and its importance. This means you have a well-informed and enthusiastic audience of approximately one!

For small-scale applied workplace-based research in government or industry, the audience is completely different, and larger. Decision-makers, managers and directors, as well as colleagues and junior staff in your department, may all be part of your audience. Some of these individuals may have expertise in your area of research but most will be generalists. You will have to convince them of the merits of your topic and the findings related to it. This task becomes even more challenging when you consider that these findings may be widely circulated to other individuals or departments (such as IT or accounting) depending on the problem and/or recommendations. For this reason, your report needs to transcend department boundaries and broach the concerns of time, money and resources for all those likely to be involved in approving and implementing your recommendations. Suddenly the small academic audience that you've been writing for has ballooned to a dozen people, all with different expertise, priorities and agendas!

The second rule is to *begin with the outcome in mind*. For academic audiences, problem identification and research process may be the most valuable part of the project. This is why the methods section is typically quite long in academic/scientific reports. However, professional audiences have different priorities. You may be consumed with the problem, but your audience is more interested in the recommendation. Articulate how your solution will solve or alleviate a particular problem, and the benefits thereof. Is there a cost saving, or time saving, associated with your solution? If so, share it.

Finally, *write concisely*. You may have a word count for academic deliverables (which are designed to help you cultivate an appropriate scope), but that will likely not be the case for a professional report. Why? Because no one cares how short it is, as long as it gets the job done. Overall, professional writing tends to be more concise and stylistically less cluttered than academic prose. This is not to say that all academic writing is intentionally impenetrable. However, as mentioned in Chapter 4 it is written by academics for academics. An intimate understanding of the context and vocabulary is assumed to be understood. By contrast, professional/generalist audiences appreciate clear, unambiguous language with key terminology defined.

One factor that contributes to sentence complexity is length. For business and government reports, try to rein in sentences that run over three lines. Reading professional trade journals or practitioner journals (which cater to academic and professional audiences) will help you get a sense of the style and formatting. Your manager can help direct you to appropriate source material, including recent in-house reports. Box 8.1 offers tips for writing up your report in a professional style.

BOX 8.1

Tips for writing a professional report

1. Read examples of professional reports. Consulting firms such as McKinsey and Co, Deloitte and Boston Consulting Group offer plentiful high quality examples.
2. Leave enough time for writing up. Reports, while short, still take time to produce.
3. Favor short and punchy sentences over extremely complex sentence structures.
4. Shelf theories. Organizations generally care little about theories; they are more likely to care about reality. If a business framework or theoretical framework is useful, by all means use it. But don't expect managers to be impressed with a theory without substantiating evidence.
5. Ruthlessly edit for conciseness. A short report is a good report.
6. Make the document easy to read and navigate. Leave spaces between paragraphs and sections, use high-quality visuals, and do not minimize margins. Insert page numbers (and a table of contents).
7. Have a colleague or manager read for revision. You may have polished it three times already, but still call it a 'draft' for the purposes of getting 'feedback'. Someone else is bound to suggest an improvement, plus you are getting buy-in from whoever reads it in its early stages.

The logic of research reports and professional reports

When drafting your report, it may help to think of your report as a conversation. This conversation will have a slightly different focus depending on whether you are talking to a professional or academic audience (see Table 8.2). As demonstrated by Table 8.2, the four main differences between academic research reports and professional reports are abstracts and executive summaries, the literature review, the methods section and recommendations.

Abstracts vs. executive summaries

First, an academic research report includes an abstract while a professional report has an executive summary. The difference is more than semantics. An abstract is a brief summary (200 words or so) of the report/article stating the research topic and question, the methods employed and also a brief teaser related to findings.

The executive summary has a different purpose. Aside from a specialist or generalist audience, findings and recommendations are foremost. In fact, the recommendations take center stage. In this way, the problem is closely linked to the recommendation with just a brief overview of anything else. Second, the executive summary tends to be longer, 500–750 words, compared to an abstract, which is normally no more than 200.

Table 8.2 The standard conversation

The questions	The answers that structure the sections of the report
So tell me what your research is about?	Title Executive summary (for professional reports) OR Abstract (for academic reports)
And why did you choose this particular topic/question?	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rationale
What do you hope to achieve?	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aims and objectives
I really don't know much about this, can you fill me in?	Background <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • context • literature review (this will likely be more detailed in an academic report)
How exactly did you go about doing your research?	Research design/approach (this will likely be more detailed in an academic report) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • methods (techniques/procedures) • limitations
And what did you find out?	Analysis/findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text, tables, graphs, charts, themes, quotes, etc. Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpretation and meaning of findings
What do we do now?	Conclusion and recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implications • significance • action plans (professional report)

Literature review

After dedicating a whole section of the book to lit reviews and their importance in academic work, it saddens me to say they are not so valued in professional writing. In academia, you aim to publish works where you will be unknown to your audience – it is therefore important to establish your credibility and that of your research process. A strong lit review can do this. In small-scale applied workplace-based research, credibility is more tangible and is based more on who you are and what you've done. Reviewing literature may be essential to the conduct of good research, but the formal lit review is not required or even appreciated.

Methods section

For academic audiences, the method section is rigorously detailed because the process is just as important as the findings, perhaps even more so. For me, academics know that findings are inextricably linked to research design. Methods need to be carefully described and scrutinized to ensure findings are valid. Second, methods can be used across different research areas, so it's important that methods be documented and promulgated for further use.

Professional audiences are no doubt interested in the credibility of your findings, but they are infinitely less interested in a play by play of question formulation and concept operationalization. They want the result, the trend, the pattern and the insight. A laborious methods section can delay the receipt of that insight. But that does not mean that you should bypass the methods section. It is important, just keep it concise.

You might say something like, ‘To answer the research question, I conducted X number of surveys across five different departments last month. The results were analyzed using specialized software and the results triangulated with employment data from the company’s annual report’. You can always expand from there, but the last thing you want to do is proceed with a chronological account of your research journey, a sort of ‘creation story’: ‘In the beginning ... I had a thought about why this problem exists. So I sat down and did some reading. And I decided to do a survey, but this took many drafts to get all 42 questions ready. For instance, Question 1 ...’ Instead of an inner monologue, provide only the information necessary to assure your audience of the robustness of your research work. Then prioritize elements of the report that are most important to your audience, that is the conclusion and recommendations.

Recommendations

This is really what sets academic and professional deliverables apart. Academic research reports conclude with their findings, significance and implications for further research. Typically, the only recommendation is to conduct more research on the topic!

In professional deliverables, recommendations are THE point of the research and the end goal in ‘applied’ research. In fact, we would venture to say that the rest of the report is just an extended justification of the recommendations. Recommendations should be situated carefully into the resource scope and political landscape of the organization. The point is to make a series of scaffolded steps that make implementation seem practical and necessary.

Anatomy of an academic report

Academic reports have a very standard structure with many subheadings. The list below is quite expansive and should give you a good sense of academic expectations related to research accounts.

- *Title* – Go for clear, concise and unambiguous.
- *Summary/abstract* – Abstracts are so condensed that they are hard to get right. But they are extremely informative to your processes. Make sure it represents your work from aims and objectives through to methods, findings, discussion and conclusions.
- *Research question/hypothesis* – This is your last chance to really nail the articulation of what you attempted to find out.

- *Introduction/rationale* – The main job of this section is to introduce your topic and convince readers that the problem you want to address is significant and worth exploring (which is why a few existing stats related to the extent/depth of the problem can be effective). This section should give some context to the problem, and lead your readers to a ‘therefore’ conclusion that sets up your aims and objectives. The trick is to write purposefully.
- *Aims/objectives* – There should be a goodness-of-fit between what you set out to do and what you eventually did.
- *Literature review* – The goal here is to review past research in order to show a place for your own research processes. Depending on the nature of your project, as well as covering past research, your literature review may have a section that situates your study in a conceptual or theoretical framework.
- *Background* – This is a fairly straightforward chapter/section that offers the reader contextual information about your research setting, culture, political arena, etc. For example, if your study were on the threats of tourism to the traditional culture of Palau, you would need to offer your readers context regarding Palau’s geography, tourism potential, history and culture, as well as tourism trends. Remember to include only what a reader needs in order to work through your thesis. If it is not essential, don’t include it.
- *Methods* – All research design sections include methods comprising information on how you found respondents, i.e. population and sample/sampling procedures; data collection methods, i.e. surveying, interviewing and document analysis; and methods of analysis, i.e. statistical or thematic analysis.
- *Limitations/delimitations* – You will need to clearly articulate all factors that have had an impact on your research processes/results. While it is crucial that you offer full disclosure here, try to avoid being overly apologetic. You need to offer strong justification for what you did and why your data is credible in spite of any constraints.
- *Ethical considerations/approval procedures* – You will need to review the processes you adopted in order to ensure the emotional, physical and intellectual well-being of your study participants; and the approval processes you may have gone through.
- *Findings* – Findings are the presentation of the answers you have found to your key questions. They are neither raw data nor the full abstraction of your data back to theory. Rather, this is a summative description of data that you find most significant. It is therefore important to resist the temptation to summarize the answer to every question you asked in your research processes. What you need to present is what is most key, interesting, educative, informative and best makes the case regarding your research question/hypothesis.
- *Discussion* – This is where you get to make something of your data. The structure here is almost always thematic and tied to the storylines that have emerged from your data. It is your opportunity to take what you discovered in your findings and argue their implications/significance. So while the findings section

may be fairly straightforward reporting, the discussion section/chapter is made up of purposeful arguments, arguments that emerge from your findings and show that you have met your aims and objectives. Discussion sections are not always present in qualitative research.

- *Conclusions* – Drawing conclusions is all about clearly summarizing what your research processes have revealed and linking this back to your project's main questions, aims and objectives in the most compelling and credible way. This is generally a tight section/chapter (and should be, given the work your 'discussion' has done). You do not tend to introduce new material in the conclusion other than the possibility of an original framework or model.
- *Recommendations* – In social science research, recommendations are often limited to 'recommendations for future research' – made on the basis of need for further verification due to the limitations and delimitations of the study, the next logical step in understanding an issue, or the identification of an existing gap in the literature. Such recommendations are generally included in the conclusion. In applied science research, however, recommendations are an essential part of the back end of a report and often warrant their own section. Such recommendations should be clearly linked to findings, highly applied and practicable. Consider grouping these by ease of implementation, i.e., timeframe, cost, difficulty and stakeholder involvement.
- *References* – Perfection! Nothing less is expected or accepted. Take the time to do this right – it's a good time to be obsessive about detail.

Anatomy of a professional report

The most widely used professional deliverable is a report. This is good news because there is one template, and many examples are available in the public and private sectors. Everything from business reports to policy briefs tends to follow roughly the same formula of six sections (though sometimes one or two are combined):

1. Executive summary.
2. Introduction and background.
3. Research design and analysis.
4. Recommendation and outcomes.
5. Conclusion.
6. References/Appendix.

Avoid the temptation to tinker with this model of efficiency. Your audience is very comfortable with this consistent, reliable and useful format; anything else is an unnecessary cognitive load or distraction. At the very least, your manager may assume that severe deviations from this model are proof of your inexperience in the art of report writing.

- *Executive summary* – This is the most important part of the report, named for the busy manager who has no time to read pages 2–59. The executive summary should be a microcosm of your entire report. It’s interesting, it’s informative, it’s useful and most of all, it is highly concentrated. Just add water and it will expand to fill your bathtub! Sounds straightforward, right? Unfortunately executive summaries are also the most misunderstood and abused sections of the professional report.

Let’s clear up the confusion by considering what an executive summary is *not*. As mentioned, an executive summary is not an abstract, it is not a teaser, nor a film trailer. It is not a mystery novel with a surprise ending. The busy professional will not bother to hunt for your point. Reports are generally not read, they are scanned. Assume your reader is too busy even to turn the page. This means you should get the important points on the first page, in the first paragraph. And what’s the most important point? Recommendations.

Relinquish your recommendations. Yes, up front – and yes, it can be uncomfortable. You may think, ‘Where’s the chronology and context? Where’s the nuance?’. It will be in the second paragraph. The most effective executive summaries tend to work backwards from the recommendation. For this reason, the executive summary should be written last, when you are well-practiced with the material and can articulate and condense it most concisely. Since it needs to be concise, clear and readable to a generalist, it is a good idea to have at least two other people outside the organization read it and provide feedback. For more tips, an example of an effective executive summary is included later in this chapter.

- *Background information* – This section provides valuable context. What is the issue? How did it come to be an issue (very briefly)? What will happen if we do not address this problem? Typically this section involves a lot of data. Facts, figures, quotes, visuals (but don’t overload your readers). The point is to convey the scale of the issue and its urgency. This is not to say that the origin story need be evil; it might be a good issue. For example, strong growth of the company (a good thing) may mean that processes created for a smaller company may have become inefficient in the changing environment. The point is to demonstrate that this situation is unsustainable and costing valuable resources in the interim.
- *Research design and analysis* – The analysis evaluates several possible solutions to the problem identified in the background section. Remember that all problems have multiple solutions depending on how they are defined. These solutions will likely have different costs, benefits and angles. Feel free to include an analytic framework such as a cost–benefit analysis, or decision matrix.

This section may also utilize primary data such as data collected from surveys or focus groups (68% of those surveyed favored solution C) to assist the decision-making process. Notice that this does not require a lengthy

description of methods. Only the briefest of overviews is necessary about the origin of this data, i.e. ‘a total of 56 individuals were interviewed across three departments’ rather than a laborious recount. Similarly, lengthy rows of raw data or transcribed interviews are not generally preserved. Quotes and snapshots are acceptable, but if you think a complete data set is important for credibility purposes, include it as an appendix.

- *Recommendations* – This section should pluck the best solutions from the analysis section and sell them! Remember to link to all your hard work in the previous section. A sample segway could be: ‘Based on the analysis in the previous section, it is recommended that the solution of X be implemented. It is anticipated that the following outcomes of implementing this recommendation will be ...’

Once the benefits have dazzled your audience, it’s time for a peek behind the curtain. Outline costs and timelines. Remember initial and maintenance costs of both time and money. Yes, no matter how glorious your solution and its benefits may be, the job is incomplete if the accounting department remains unconvinced. Help guide them through the skepticism with a ‘pilot program’. Roll out your solution in one team, one location, or one group of customers. This is cheaper (which pleases the accountants) and less risky (which pleases whoever has to sign off), and means you can scale up the project later with the benefit of feedback.

- *Conclusion* – Wrap up with a call to action. Remember that problem you identified in the background section? It isn’t going away. Even as we speak, time, money, lives could be saved! Insert a strong statistic about the scale of the problem and its compounding awfulness/inefficiency. Then cut to your recommendation (one sentence). Keep it concise (two paragraphs should do it). Your audience has hung in through charts, graphs and laborious costing and they are tired now. Leave them on a high note and then bow gracefully into the reference section.
- *Referencing* – Credible, recent sources bolster the strength and persuasiveness of the report. Let the experts at the International Monetary Fund (etc.) convince your boss. Good references also reflect well on you as a professional. They demonstrate your skills as a critical consumer of information, selecting only the finest quality cuts.
- *Appendix* (optional) – Assume that this section will be read only by the rarest of souls. Cost calculation worksheets and detailed schedules may find an audience in those who are held responsible for implementation, but mostly accounting and finance will peruse this section. Think people who enjoy doing their taxes. For this reason, never put vital information here that is found nowhere else. Readers will not flip to page 49A in the middle of the report to find whatever gem you have hidden there. Instead state the information (even if it’s an estimate) and follow with ‘for more details, see the Appendix, page 49A’.

Creating an effective executive summary

An executive summary is a first date, first impression and panel job interview all at once. Done poorly you can lose the audience's confidence and even the audience itself. By contrast, a well-articulated and polished executive summary puts the reader at ease and builds respect.

Clearly the stakes are high. But don't panic. Even seasoned professionals have problems producing an effective executive summary. The good news is that poor executive summaries are usually not the result of bad writing, but of a failure to understand the purpose and components of the section (See Box 8.2).

- *Purpose of the executive summary* – The executive summary is a concise, compelling synthesis of the report highlights. It must be informative, persuasive and capable of standing alone.
- *Components of an executive summary* – The two most important elements of the executive summary are: the problem and the solution (your recommended course of action).
- *Problem identification* – You may choose to identify trends that have been building towards a particular problem that now requires resolution. Another approach is to detail the scale of the problem (statistics and hooks work well here – remember to include a citation). The problem should have some urgency, otherwise there is no impetus to correct it.
- *Craft an actionable scope* – Inspire action by breaking the problem into a smaller, actionable scope. You cannot fix a large looming public deficit with a single executive summary, but you can make a grounded argument to the Minister of the Economy to phase out petrol subsidies to all but the poorest segments of society over a 3-year period; and use part of the savings to fund vulnerable portfolios, such as public health.
- *Recommendation* – The proposed solution should solve the problem identified and give some indication of outcomes. 'This report advocates that the organization pursue the following course of action, X, given the importance/problem of Y and anticipated outcomes of Z.'

BOX 8.2

Common mistakes in the executive summary

The most common mistake made in executive summaries is to focus on the parts of the report rather than the content. This presents itself innocuously as informing the reader of the sequence of the report, i.e. 'The first section details the background while sections

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two and three offer analysis and debate for the recommendation in section four ...' (and then proceeds to go through each section in turn).

This is not an executive summary. It is a glorified table of contents, and just as dull to read. To make the situation compelling enough for the reader to act to remedy it, get to the point as quickly and concisely as possible (preferably within one page, single spaced). Perhaps the best way to learn how to write an executive summary is to dissect an example or two.

Executive Summary 1

Bowel surgeon Andrew Wakefield was the lead author of a 1998 study published in the medical journal *The Lancet* that purported to establish a link between the Measles–Mumps–Rubella vaccine (MMR) and autism in children. Wakefield's media splash induced paranoia in some parents, leading to a critical drop in the number of children vaccinated with MMR, particularly in the UK, US and Australia. Immunization rates were particularly low among educated, high-income families.

Suspicion of Wakefield began to mount, however, as other scientists were unable to reproduce Wakefield's results. An investigation published in *The Sunday Times* questioned the methodology and medical ethics behind Wakefield's study, as well as exposing Wakefield's commercial interest in discrediting MMR – he had filed a patent on a vaccine to replace it. As a result, 10 of the paper's original 13 authors withdrew their findings, and *The Lancet* formally retracted the paper. The UK General Medical Council opened an inquiry and pronounced their verdict: Wakefield had acted dishonestly, having misled the public by fixing the data to suit his case. Wakefield was barred from the practice of medicine in the UK in 2010 for scientific misconduct.

Mumps is now on the rise as unvaccinated populations enter university. It is imperative that educational facilities work to combat its spread. This paper details how this can be accomplished.

Word count: 253

Executive Summary 2

Universities should require eligible students to obtain an MMR (measles–mumps–rubella) vaccine before commencing their studies on campus. This recommendation follows the recent explosion in mumps, a highly contagious, air-borne virus that can cause sterility and, in some cases, death.

Mumps is entirely preventable and was considered eradicated in developed countries until 1998, when Dr Andrew Wakefield claimed to have found a link between the vaccine and autism. Take-up of the vaccine has fallen by 70% in some areas of the US, UK and Australia leading to outbreaks years after Wakefield was disbarred from medical practice when his work was found to have been an 'elaborate fraud' (Cohen and Falco, 2011).

As of 2009, mumps cases had risen exponentially from 70 in 2001 to over 1,300 in the UK alone (WHO, 2010). The most susceptible populations are those currently in university, as their cohort has one of the lowest rates of immunization.

As university presents an environment conducive to outbreaks (large gathering of people, communal living, etc.), and educational facilities have a duty of care to their students, universities would be negligent if they did not require that all eligible students meet the minimum requirements of vaccination in order to commence on-campus studies. It is anticipated that this effort will help to secure the health of all students (including immune-compromised students who can't be vaccinated) as well as to help educate the next generation of parents and thus finally overturn the campaign of misinformation promulgated through Wakefield's study.

Word count: 246

Which is the better executive summary? Most would agree that it is Executive Summary 2. The recommendation (in bold) is stated clearly from the outset. Moreover it is linked clearly to an urgent problem, and is tied to a specific organization to act in its own and the public's best interests. Rather than following a chronology of events, Executive Summary 2 focuses on the recommendation, and then works backwards to cover the main problem and its potential scale if left untreated.

As you construct your own executive summary remember to start with the outcome in mind and prioritize the recommendation. If your manager can't find it, can't see its relevance, or remembers it 10 seconds later, your recommendation stands a poor chance of being implemented.

From first to final draft

What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure.

Samuel Johnson



Photo 8.1 The challenge of writing up

Regardless of the nature of the deliverable, you still need to write it, and writing up can be one of the most challenging parts of your research project. Even when you have data, visuals and an interesting narrative, putting it all together is hard work. As pictured in Photo 8.1, writing can be exhausting, and revision even more so. The good news is, you are not alone (see Box 8.3).

BOX 8.3

On writing

Writing is easy. You just sit down at the typewriter, open up a vein and bleed it out drop by drop.

Walter 'Red' Smith

The road to hell is paved with works-in-progress.

Philip Roth

No pen, no ink, no table, no room, no time, no quiet, no inclination.

James Joyce

I am irritated by my own writing. I am like a violinist whose ear is true, but whose fingers refuse to reproduce precisely the sound he hears within.

Gustave Flaubert

I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning, and took out a comma. In the afternoon I put it back again.

Oscar Wilde

Writing ... a combination of ditch-digging, mountain-climbing, treadmill and childbirth.

Edna Ferber

Being a good writer is 3% talent, 97% not being distracted by the Internet.

Anonymous

It is essential that your report is polished and sharp. Your authority can be enhanced or destroyed not only by the quality of your research but also by its presentation. So be prepared to seek and take advice, and draft, redraft and redraft again.

Drafting and redrafting

There is no doubt that the journey from first draft to submission can be long and challenging. In fact, contrary to the desire of just about every fibre in your body, you may find that your final document does not retain much from that first draft. The irony is of course that you can't get to that final draft without all the drafts in between!

While it may seem somewhat tedious, almost all good writers do go through some variation of this process. Box 8.4 offers a number of checklists for helping you get to a quality end product.

BOX 8.4

Checklist for the redrafting process

Reworking the first draft

It would be nice if your first draft were it. But it rarely works that way. When you step back and take stock, you are likely to find that the process of writing itself has evolved your ideas, and that your thoughts have moved beyond what you initially managed to capture on paper. As you work through your first draft, ask yourself:

- Is this making sense? Does the logic flow between sections?
- Is the 'voice' I am using professional and polished?
- Do I need to incorporate more material/ideas – or are sections really repetitive?
- Is each section complete?
- Have I sought and responded to feedback?

Reworking the second draft

Once you are happy with the overall ideas, arguments, logic and structure, it is time to fine-tune your arguments and strive for coherence and consistency. In doing this, ask yourself:

- How can I make my points and arguments clearer? Do I 'waffle on' at any point? Am I using lots of jargon and acronyms? Should I incorporate some/more examples?
- Do I want to include some/more diagrams, photos, maps, etc.?
- Are there clear and logical links between sections?
- Is the length and format on target?
- Have I sought and responded to feedback?

Moving towards the penultimate draft

Being ready to move towards a penultimate draft implies that you are reasonably happy with the construction and logic of the arguments running throughout and within your document. Attention can now be turned to fluency, clarity and overall readability. Ask yourself:

- Are there ways I can further increase clarity? Are my terms used consistently? Have I got rid of unnecessary jargon?
- Are there ways I can make this read more fluently? Can I break up my longer sentences? Can I rework my one-sentence paragraphs?

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- Are there ways I can make this more engaging? Can I limit the use of passive voice? Are my arguments strong and convincing?
- Am I sure I have protected the confidentiality of my respondents/participants?
- Have I guarded against any potential accusations of plagiarism? Have I checked and double-checked my sources, both in the text and in the references or bibliography?
- Have I written and edited any preliminary and end pages, namely title page, table of contents, list of figures, appendices and references?
- Have I thoroughly checked my spelling and grammar?
- Have I done a word count?
- Have I sought and responded to feedback?

Producing the final draft

You would think that if you did all the above, your final document would be done. Not quite; you now need to do a final edit. If it is a large work and you can fund it, you might want to consider using a copy editor. It is amazing what editorial slip-ups someone with specialist skills can find, even after you have combed through your own work a dozen times. Some things you may want to ask prior to submission are:

- Have I looked for typos of all sorts?
- Have I triple-checked spelling (especially those things that spell checkers cannot pick up, like typing 'form' instead of 'from')?
- Have I checked my line spacing, fonts, margins, etc.?
- Have I numbered all pages, including preliminary and end pages, sequentially? Have I made sure they are all in the proper order?
- Have I checked through the final document to make sure there were no printing glitches (a particular problem with figures and tables)?

Seeking advice

When moving from the first to the final draft, you may need to take the uncomfortable step of seeking feedback. Now you might think this would be a straightforward process, but that is not always the case. You need to know where you are in the process and ask for comments related to your current needs. A good strategy here is to ask your readers to comment on the same questions you need to ask yourself as you work through various drafts of your document. If it is a first draft, you will probably want advice on overall ideas, arguments, logic and structure, while later stages will see you seeking suggestions for consistency, coherence, readability and, finally, copy editing.

Seeking the advice of your supervisor(s) can be invaluable; so too can the advice of colleagues, peers and family. In fact, at some stage, it is worth asking a non-specialist to read your work to see if the logic makes sense to him or her – because it

should. And don't forget to try to get a sense of timeframe. It can take some readers several days (even a couple of weeks) to get back to you.

Now knowing who to ask and what to ask is one thing, but being willing to hand over what you have written is quite another. What if your secret fears of not being good enough are validated? Handing over is always exposing, but keep in mind that fears of incompetence are often a crisis of confidence – not a lack of ability. And besides, it is better to find out if you are off track early, than wait until you have invested a huge amount of time heading in the wrong direction. The point is not to delay asking for feedback. The worst thing you can do is hide your draft until you're either inconveniencing someone to read it the day before it's due, or you wait so long that there's no time to revise the document even if you received constructive feedback that very minute.

But let's say you have managed to ask the right person the right questions and you get your draft back. If you are lucky, it is full of constructive, relevant and thought-provoking comments. You should be happy – not only has someone put in a lot of time and effort, but they have provided you with a road map for moving forward. But, of course, you're human. So instead of being happy, you are devastated. In fact, you may feel insulted, frustrated and even incompetent. You are not alone here. We all wish feedback was limited to validation of how clever we are. But that's not useful. Validation simply doesn't move you forward. You need to accept advice and not take criticism personally. If you do, writing up will become an emotional minefield.

So now that you have the advice, what do you do with it? Well, unreflexive incorporation is just as bad as blanket dismissal. You need to mentally take the feedback on board, consider it in light of the source and work through the implications that the advice has for what you are trying to say. And of course this is particularly important if you find yourself getting conflicting advice. Talk to your supervisor/lecturer, but remember that it is your work and you are the one who needs to make the final call.

PREPARING PERSUASIVE PRESENTATIONS

Presentations convey your thoughts, ideas and your work to an audience. It is an opportunity to engage productively with decision-makers, colleagues and stakeholders. It may also one of the most important parts of your small-scale applied workplace-based research project. And the most nerve-wracking. This section deals with how to avoid death by PowerPoint (and conversely, avoiding motion-sickness with Prezi) and how to handle questions with aplomb.

Elements of a powerful presentation:

- *Expertise and knowledge* – Without a doubt you need to know your stuff. You do not have a right to present if you don't know what you are talking about. Knowing your stuff gives you credibility and confidence. But, here is the kicker. *You do not need to tell them everything you know!* Let your knowledge

be obvious by showing that you can extract essential, compelling elements; by your confidence; by your flexibility. This is not about your ego. This is not about showing people how much you know. This is about your audience and what they walk away with.

- *Your objective* – You will undoubtedly have an objective related to your study. Say, for example, ‘to outline your study and communicate findings’. But, and this is important, *stop and think about what you want your audience to achieve*. Is your goal for your audience to know all the ins and outs of your research process and know exactly what you found? Or could it also be that you want them to be shocked, be motivated, be willing to change behaviors, be willing to get onboard, be a change agent? These should be the things that matter when we are presenting – and the things we often forget. But if you can articulate this type of audience-related goal, it will change how you structure and deliver your presentation. You have no choice but to go from reporting to motivating.
- *Storytelling* – Without a doubt the best presenters know how to **tell a story**. They tell a tale, they build anticipation, they shoot for ‘aha’ moments, they use anecdotes, and they are not afraid of weaving in appropriate bits of emotion.
- *The power of you* – Here is a fact: *people are motivated by people*. Compare your favorite university lecture-based subject with your most hated. I bet that content is only a minor player in that differentiation. It is the lecturer who motivates and inspires. *And that means you count*. Your presentation needs to have your stamp on it; you need to ‘show up’. Now that doesn’t mean you should try to be funny if you’re not (that will flop!) or try to be authoritative if you’re shy (that will only make you more nervous), but do bring out your unique brand of warmth. Think about what your best friend, partner or parents would say is your best quality – authoritative, sincere, funny, warm, wise – and then try to present in such a way that your audience can see that quality reflected in your presentation.
- *Audio-visual aids* – These should support you, not replace you. If you are using PowerPoint slides, aim for no more than one slide for every 2 minutes on stage – less if possible. Try to move away from text-based slides to more powerful visuals. Consider that using a lapel microphone and a wireless mouse allows you to move around and draw focus (and dispel some nervous energy). Hiding behind a podium does not allow you to shine and is less likely to be engaging.

Avoiding death by PowerPoint (for yourself and others)

It is hard to believe, but PowerPoint was once the domain of the elite few. In the 1990s, graduate students had to learn how to use this brand new medium. Now, 400 million licenses later, ‘slideware’ software has become so ubiquitous that elementary school children have PowerPoint presentation assessments. How do you set yourself apart in a sea of these young up-and-coming go-getters?

First, recognize that PowerPoint is merely a tool. You, the presenter, are the active agent. Think of the software as notes that keep you on-message. It is not a substitute for your persuasion, insights and adaptability. Rather, you should be prepared to give the presentation **WITHOUT** software should the need arise (and sometimes it does!). For inspiration and examples, see Box 8.5.

BOX 8.5

Great TED talks (www.ted.com)

These TED talks are well worth a look – pay attention to style and try to identify what makes these presenters so compelling.

Sean Anchor (2012) ‘The Happy Secret to Better Work’

Philip Evans (2014) ‘How Data Will Transform Business’

William Stephen (2015) ‘A Talk About Nothing’

Simon Sinek (2010) ‘How Great Leaders Inspire Action’

Keren Elazari (2014) ‘Hackers: the Internet’s Immune System’

Glen Greenwald (2014) ‘Why Privacy Matters’

Margaret Heffernan (2012) ‘Conflict as Thinking’

John Doerr (2007) ‘Salvation and Profit in Greentech’

Ken Robinson (2006) ‘Do Schools Kill Creativity?’

Michael Porter (2013) ‘Why Business Can Be Good at Solving Social Problems’

Second, less is more when it comes to the number of slides. You have probably seen presentations where the slides rush by as if on a flip-book (bonus points for cheesy swipe and checkerboard transitions between slides). Some speakers appear to be in competition for how many slides they can squeeze in before the buzzer (or people fall asleep/leave). Don’t let this be you. Craft a few polished slides and spend time on and between each one. A good rule of thumb is to use no more than one or two slides per minute. This means that a 15-minute presentation should have *no more than* 30 slides. Remember, you need to be the star of the show.

Additionally, do not try to cram in everything; your font needs to be legible from a distance. In fact, limiting words on your slide is a good idea as demonstrated by Figure 8.1. Compelling images are much more effective in a bid to be persuasive.

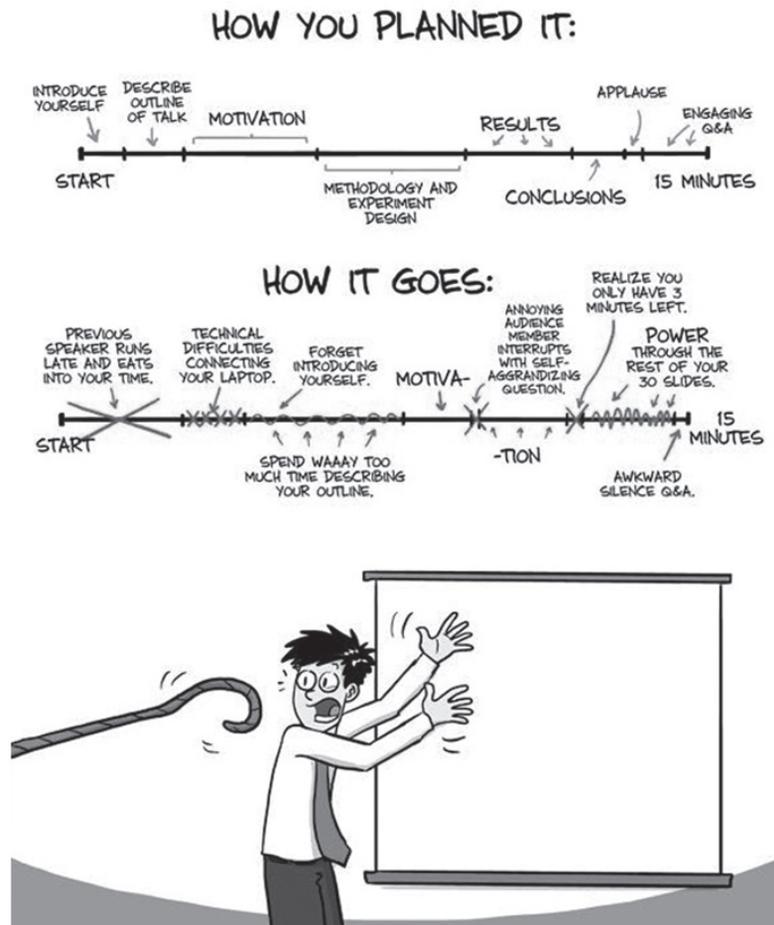


Figure 8.1 Your presentation ('Piled higher and deeper' by Jorge Cham www.phdcomics.com)

Dealing with anxiety

We know that presenting can cause real panic. But guess what? No one else can see that ball in your stomach or the feeling like you are eating your own heart. They can't feel it – unless you let them. That means, you can still feel nervous, but no one has to know. The key is to *look confident*. Research shows that audiences readily conflate confidence with competence. When you speak confidently, others assume that you are competent.

How does one whose heart is eating itself manage to look confident? The easiest way is to stop doing whatever makes you look *unconfident*: nervous pacing, hand wringing, heavy sweating, muffled speech, etc. All of these and more can be hidden, mitigated, or overcome with some clever strategies and preparation.

First, there is no substitute for a dress rehearsal in front of a sympathetic audience (friends, family, roommates). Have one of them video you, or do it yourself using a tripod. You will probably watch this video with dismayed incredulity that your voice ‘actually sounds like that’. Also, prepare to be amazed that you used ‘um’ 35 times while fiddling with your scarf or your tie over the course of 20 minutes. It’s ok. Well, it will be. Now you know to pay attention to your hands, and not to wear a scarf. A key is being aware. One student, for example, gave an entire presentation while slowly stepping one toe in front of the other, incrementally shifting in place. The audience was too busy watching her walk on a moving tightrope to really pay attention to anything she said.

The other benefit of a practice session is that others can help you identify potential gaps. Ask your audience what was unclear or unconvincing. Then improve that section AND create a slide at the end of the presentation that provides more details. For instance, an extra slide with cost calculations is always helpful. Commonly, people want to know ‘where you got that number’. Be prepared to provide a source or substantiate the estimate. By having these slides at the ready you will strengthen the persuasiveness of your research and bolster your own credibility as a competent professional.

Dealing with audience questions

You may breathe a sigh of relief when your presentation is over. But then during Q & A you get thrown a difficult question that you don’t know how to answer. Well, it is important to recognize that *questioning is not an adversarial process*. Rather, a question is the continuation of a conversation. Relish the fact that that your audience member is interested enough to want to continue the dialogue.

The worst case scenario is not a room full of questions, but a room full of silence (like the scenario in Figure 8.1 below). No questions mean your audience is distracted, bored and possibly asleep. With this in mind, you can see questions for what they are – engagement. And you can be thankful when you get one.

Types of questions

Questions and questioners typically fall within three categories.

- *Clarification* (What is that first word on slide 5? What year is that data from? Does your recommendation require any ongoing costs?)
- *Analysis* (How did you decide between the alternative recommendations? How do we know the problem of X is caused by Z? How did you estimate the cost of delaying action?)
- *Gaps* (Did you consider X? I would have considered X, you should consider X.)

The most common questions are simple points of clarification. The response merely requires a quick and simple piece of data and a credible source. Analysis

and gap questions necessitate a longer response. The advice here is to hit the high points and encourage the audience to read the full details in your written report. Gap questions tend to arise from genuine interest OR a need to look intelligent. The answer for both is the same: ‘Thank you for the suggestion, that’s very interesting, and I’ll take that on board when reviewing the section on X.’ You’ll be pleased to know that hostile questioning is exceedingly rare. When unclear about how you should respond, just say, ‘I’ll have to look into that and get back to you’.

BOX 8.6

When things aren’t going to plan

- *Technology failures* – It could be a failure of the software, hardware or Internet connection, but technology dramas can happen. Guard against software issues by saving your PowerPoint presentation on two sources (USB and email/Dropbox); counter hardware failures by bringing your laptop. It’s always good to have a back-up of video clips or screen shots of websites on your USB, just in case. All of these suggestions are born of painful experience, trust us!
- *Running out of time* – This is incredibly common. Perhaps a previous meeting or speaker ran late, your audience got caught up in traffic, or due to technology dramas above, everything is running behind. The worst thing you can do is try to get through every slide regardless. We see this all the time. With 5 minutes to go, the presenter tries to fly through 17 more slides. The end result? The audience doesn’t remember a thing that was said in that blur of a monologue. When conditions change, change with them. Skip the more minor points (you can always deal with them during questions), and concentrate on the big take-away message.
- *Interruptions* – Fire drills notwithstanding, interruptions are generally easy to deal with. Common interruptions are people coming in late, early questions in the middle of your presentation, or noisy distractions. In the first instance, you may wish to pause for a moment while everyone gets resettled. In the second, answer briefly, then deflect by saying you’ll be happy to tackle questions at the end. For the third, just wait. Don’t try to shout over crazy distractions. Wait for the ambulance to turn the corner outside, wait for someone’s phone to stop ringing. Wait – but not so long that your audience becomes distracted.

A NOTE ON EMPLOYABILITY

Employers are looking for exactly the people who can deliver the professional outputs described in this chapter, particularly those who can do so with confidence

and finesse. How can you demonstrate these skills clearly in written and interview form? Luckily I spent the first three years of my professional career as a recruiter and I'm here to help you do just that.

Demonstrating valuable skill-sets on your CV

The first step in enhancing employability is to identify what hard and soft skills you have that are valuable to employers. Soft skills are interpersonal skills like communication, negotiation, critical thinking and time-management. These are valuable skills that cannot be simply taught in a classroom. They are also the first ones to be noticed by an employer in an interview. Are you well spoken? How do you react in group settings? Are you on time?

Hard skills are technical. These typically include software/programming expertise, language skills, formal training (such as Agile, etc.), and in some interpretations, advanced degrees. These are skills that get you to the interview stage. This means that your CV and cover letter should prioritize these. How? You may consider identifying your proficiency in each hard skill on your CV. For languages spoken, if you're fluent in Arabic write that instead of just listing the name of the language. For Excel, say whether you are a basic, intermediate or advanced Excel user. Not sure? If you can create a spreadsheet from scratch, do simple calculations and filter results, you're a basic user. If you can use more complex formulas and create or modify macro commands, you're probably an intermediate user. If you can utilize advanced functions (If, VLOOKUP, IS), manage macros, work with Pivot tables and dabble in basic programming in VBA you're an advanced or expert user. It's worth listing a few of these details to identify what experience you've had that is valuable to the organization.

Other elements of a strong CV that portray you as a valuable candidate include:

- action words;
- quantified success;
- tailored to the job under consideration.

Action words make you the active agent in your CV. For a list of them, see Table 8.3. They are also closely linked to accomplishments, initiatives and results. A common mistake that inexperienced (and even some experienced) professionals make is to use a job description and list of duties for each position in their CV. Don't do it! Job descriptions are vague, dull and usually wrong anyway. Instead, highlight accomplishments. Under the entry for each job, a sentence or two is fine to describe the role. Then use bullet points to identify at least three personal and team accomplishments in that position.

Bullet points should be concise and precise using quantifiable success. Consider the ways you can quantify success on your CV using specific measures: time and money. For instance, instead of listing ‘Worked on a project to deliver significant savings to the department’, be more specific: ‘Helped deliver a project that delivered \$145K in savings over 2 months.’ Perhaps the numbers are modest and don’t seem impressive. This could be the case if you are working with a small company, start-up, government department or non-profit. In this case, utilize the power of percentages. Raising \$25K for the International Red Cross would be a minute percentage of their annual goal. However, for a local non-profit, the same amount may be 20% of their annual goal!

Use the appropriate scales to give meaning to the accomplishments that you helped deliver, either as an individual or as a team. Timeframes and team size also merit a mention. If you were promoted within 3 months to a more senior role or into a more prestigious division, include this. If you were part of a small team that delivered a large project, mention that as well.

Once you have a template CV of no more than two pages (if you have less than five years of professional experience), you can adapt it for your job search. Does this mean you need to change your CV for each job for which you apply? Yes and no. Do not completely re-write your résumé for each position, but craft it so that passes the first hurdle – which will be a machine.

If sci-fi has taught us anything, it’s that machines are not always our friends. And they are definitely impassable gatekeepers when it comes to job hunting. With

Table 8.3 Action words for your CV/résumé

Leadership and initiative	Analysis	Communication/people skills
Developed	Evaluated	Collaborated
Designed	Assessed	Facilitated
Generated	Measured	Advocated
Launched	Monitored	Persuaded
Initiated	Researched	Supervised
Implemented	Surveyed	Drafted
Administered	Systematized	Wrote
Delivered	Conducted	Edited/Revised
Executed	Forecasted	Mediated
Directed	Conserved	Negotiated
Established	Corrected	Marketed
Reorganized	Customized	Resolved
Increased	Maximized	Mapped
Handled	Diagnosed	Managed
Produced	Extracted	Coordinated
Proposed	Gathered	
Formulated	Inspected	
Recommended	Improved	
	Planned	

the increasing number of applicants for each position, HR and recruitment agencies are increasingly turning to text-matching software to sort through mountains of CVs. These machines use language in the job posting ad to shortlist resumes for human review. Unfortunately, these machines do NOT know synonyms. If the hiring manager is looking for an employee proficient in ‘Excel’, and you put that you’re an expert in ‘Microsoft Office software’ well too bad. The machine will not recognize the task by any other name, and into the discard pile you go. Thus, when you apply for a position, first identify the key words in the job posting and make sure these *exact words* are reflected in your CV. This is the only way to get in front of a real live person.

Of course, this is not a license to exaggerate your experience; rather, you may need to rephrase some of your accomplishments so that they are recognized by the machine. Remember, anything on the CV is fair game for an interviewer to ask you about during the next stage. So as you craft your CV be prepared discuss the details of your experience and how it’s applicable to the current position. Box 8.7 offers a checklist of résumé ‘dos and don’ts’.

BOX 8.7

Dos and don’ts for your CV/résumé

The average recruiter or manager looks at your CV (or résumé) for about 12 seconds. Any red flags such as glaring spelling errors will see your CV tossed on the reject pile in less than that. Give yourself the best chance for getting an interview by paying careful attention to what’s required.

Do

- Highlight your accomplishments using action words.
- Quantify your success (money/time/lives saved in your project).
- Emphasize transferable skills from your research project (cross-departmental initiatives, engaging with stakeholders, etc.).
- Ensure that your public social media accounts align with your CV (update LinkedIn, lockdown your privacy settings on all private social media accounts. Remember everyone can see your Facebook profile photo, and recruiters do check).
- Use/create an appropriate email address for professional correspondence (Stans TheMan1998@cheesydomainname.com does not get interviews, but his CV does get put up on the bulletin board in the Human Resources office kitchen with his name blanked out).
- Read carefully for grammar and spelling mistakes (remember, spell checkers will not save you if you accidentally delete the ‘f’ from ‘shift’!). Better yet, have someone else read it.

(Continued)

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Don't

- Use expressions like 'duties included' – that is job description language, not accomplishment-oriented language. And it's dull.
- Claim undue credit, exaggerate your experience or lie (it will be obvious when you can't discuss the project/accomplishment intelligently in the interview).
- Include highly sensitive information on your CV like your Social Security number, tax file number, marital status, number of children (although this once used to be standard procedure). In the age of identity theft, it is becoming common even to exclude your street address; city and state are fine.
- Include high school odd jobs – now is the time to delete all babysitting or by the pool jobs that may be hanging on to your resume.
- List references or referees; that is for a later stage of the process.

Leveraging your project in job interviews

Congratulations. You've passed the text-matching test. You've talked to a human being and progressed to the interview stage. How to get from that first handshake to winning the job as in Photo 8.2?

The interview stage can be intimidating. But remember, if you have got an interview, you are qualified for the job. It helps to know a bit about the interview process itself, so find out as much as you can from HR, previous employees or the interwebs. Try to ascertain if you will be talking to one person, or several. For some graduate or entry-level positions there may be group assessments whereby



Photo 8.2 Leveraging your workplace-based research project in interviews

several applicants work together on a project for an afternoon and then deliver their results. Be prepared to be friendly with the competition. The good news is that you will have probably gained confidence during your work-based placement, and accumulated plenty of material to use in interview questions.

Most managers and interviewers will draw from a traditional pool of questions. Leverage your workplace project experience by incorporating them into common interview questions:

- Tell me a bit about yourself.
- Describe a recent position you've held.
- What projects did you work on? *Think small-scale applied workplace-based research project!*
- Give me an example of a time you influenced a group – *When you got the green light for your small-scale applied workplace-based research project!*
- What accomplishments have given you the greatest satisfaction? *When my small-scale applied workplace-based research project recommendations were taken up by the organization!*
- Tell me about a time you demonstrated leadership.
- Tell me about a time you were a team player.
- Tell me about a time you overcame a challenge at work.
- What experiences/skills do you feel are particularly useful to our organization?
- Have you ever failed at anything (see Box 8.8)?

BOX 8.8

Have you ever failed?

There is only one answer to the 'have you ever failed at anything' interview question. The answer is yes. Yes, you have failed. You have failed because you are a human. Not only that, you are an interesting human that likes to try new things and sometimes those new things don't always work the first time. Not having any failures at this point in your life sends a signal that you prefer to operate within a very tight comfort zone, or actively avoid challenges. Neither of these is attractive to employers. Should you attempt to answer this question with a 'No, nothing comes to mind' the manager may assume that you are boring, too inexperienced, deceptive or have a poor memory.

Why is the organization interested in your honest answer to this question? If you have never truly failed, it is unclear to your potential manager how you will react to failure when it inevitably happens. Will you get angry, become rude or defensive? Will you withdraw, or run away, your self-esteem shattered at the slightest criticism or lost client? The organization is testing your mettle, your resilience and whether they can trust you to maintain composure in front of difficult clients, customers, etc.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Remember to avoid any personal or uncomfortable topics for the failure question (or any professional interview question, for that matter!): 'I tried to get the love of my life back but she's with another guy now.' Inappropriate! Stick to professional examples that have a productive ending: 'I failed at X, but then I took steps Y and Z to correct/overcome/learn.' It demonstrates that you are capable of humility, self-reflection, overcoming obstacles and problem-solving – valuable traits to any employer.

Keep in mind that employers will be interested in how well you write as well as how well you speak. If you produced a professional report or document, you may want to consider providing a brief synopsis or hard copy sample. For instance, the executive summary or a condensed version of your report could demonstrate your writing and organizational skills in a way that simply discussing the project may not. Most employers appreciate the opportunity to peruse these, so bring them with you to the interview (bring multiple copies in case there is more than one interviewer).

Remember that, above all, employers are looking for someone who is likeable, confident, composed, articulate and motivated. An interview is your opportunity to shine, market your skills and prove that you are well prepared for the challenges ahead.

That's all folks!

So that's it! Your research project, and quite possibly your job placement, are winding down. You're on to the next challenge, using the skills you've picked up along the way – organization, persistence, analysis, presentation and persuasion. You should feel proud that your hard work helped to improve an organization – and, who knows, maybe the world, one small-scale research project at a time.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Deliverables are the product and outcome of data gathering and analysis. These outputs represent a condensed form of hard work and insight and can take many forms, including essays, reports, policy papers and presentations.
- The first rule of writing is to know your audience. While academic papers have professors for their audience, the audience for workplace-based research is decision-makers, managers, directors as well as colleagues and junior staff.
- Presentations are an opportunity to engage productively with decision-makers, colleagues and stakeholders. Think about motivating your audience to action and welcoming questions as a continuation of the conversation.
- Employers are looking for people who can deliver professional reports, presentations and projects. The key is to demonstrate these skills clearly on your CV/résumé, and leverage them in an interview.