

## **TECH2503-17 Community Media Production**

### **Report Writing for Clients - Report for DMU Local**

The final assignment for TECH2503 is to produce an academically informed report that can be given to DMU Local, which will explain and present a case for the ongoing development and support for community media in Leicester as part of De Montfort University's commitment to supporting local communities and local community projects.

#### **DMU Local**

The #DMUlocal programme was created by De Montfort University Leicester (DMU) to make a significant contribution to the social and economic development of Leicester and bring positive change across the city. Through #DMUlocal, some of the hardest-to-reach groups are engaged in projects that focus on the three core lenses of education, health and regeneration. By working alongside Leicester City Council and other organisations, #DMUlocal offers a wide range of exciting projects that meet the needs of communities and have a transformative impact. <http://dmulocal.dmu.ac.uk/>

#### **DMU Square Mile**

"At the centre of DMU's engagement strategy is our award-winning Square Mile programme. Launched in 2011, Square Mile uses DMU's academic expertise and a network of student volunteers to offer potentially life-changing services in the Leicester community" <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/about-dmu/dmu-square-mile/dmu-square-mile.aspx>

#### **Component Four – Academic Report (50%)**

The report will take the basis for a formal individual report aimed at DMU Local about why and how community media can be used as a sustainable platform for community development.

The report will be written to formal academic standards, and will make an assessment of your experience participating in community media development project, and how your experience relates to the issues that have been raised in the lecture sessions, the presentations, your reading and the media that is provided online.

This report will demonstrate your knowledge of community media development issues, and your ability to think critically about the practices and experiences that are involved in community media. It will contribute 50% of overall assessment.

- **Minimum Work: 2000 Words Formal Academic Report Submitted via Turn-it-In**
- **Deadline: 10am Tuesday 2nd May.**
- **Marking & Feedback: Friday 25th May 2017.**

[https://wiki.our.dmu.ac.uk/w/index.php/TECH2503\\_Community\\_Media\\_Production#Component\\_Four\\_.E2.80.93\\_Academic\\_Report\\_.2850.25.29](https://wiki.our.dmu.ac.uk/w/index.php/TECH2503_Community_Media_Production#Component_Four_.E2.80.93_Academic_Report_.2850.25.29)

#### **7 Tips for Writing a Client Report**

**Agree Before You Write:** Establish report timing and content at the start of your client engagement. Every engagement will be different. For long-term projects, your client may prefer a monthly phone call, weekly email summaries, and a quarterly report. Some clients may want a short weekly report and a more comprehensive monthly report. Establish up front the frequency, method, and detail of communications.

**Write a Strong Summary:** Even with up front agreement, some clients, particularly senior level managers, may not have time to read the entire report. Use an “executive summary” format that can easily stand alone to communicate the significant parts of the report, including hard facts and figures.

**Maximize Readability:** Make your report easy to read by including carefully selected headings and bullet points. This enables your client to find information quickly. If relevant, include visual information such as graphs or pie charts to reinforce your main message and break up text.

**Keep it Simple:** Your report should only be as long as it needs to be. Do not add unnecessary length to a report just to make it appear more important. Use clear language and avoid the use of clichéd business language. Keep your report focused on the information that the client wants and needs.

**Be Accurate and Error Free:** The ability to write a well-written report is not only a critical business tool, it reinforces your brand by demonstrating your expertise and knowledge. Take time to make sure that your information is accurate. Do not rely on spell check alone to catch typographical errors. You may even want to print and read your document —it is often easier to edit “on paper” than it is to edit “on screen.”

**Customize with Personality:** Your report should align with your client's culture but also reflect the personality of your brand. Report writing does not have to be devoid of personality to be professional. Your brand should have a consistent voice and tone that matches both your personal brand and the unique needs of your client.

**Write for Your Audience:** Write your report for your audience. What information do they want to read? What questions will they want answered? Consider the best way to deliver the information. Instead of a traditional report, you may opt to use PowerPoint presentation, an interactive format like a Google Doc, or one of the many virtual collaboration tools currently on the market. Or, if your report contains a lot of data, it may be better to use Excel rather than Word. Use the method and medium that will work best for your intended audience.

<https://www.mbopartners.com/resources/article/seven-tips-client-report-writing>

### **Report writing for consultants**

To put it plainly, your report is going to have to be pretty good to compete with all the other documents that will be vying for your client’s attention. Yes, your client may have made a substantial investment in employing your services, which might push your report further up the queue, but then, of course, the flip side of this will be that their expectations will be so much higher. Your firm might be expert in its area but this expertise will be lost if you fail to communicate it effectively. And you will simply become one of the many thousands of people who regularly spend hours struggling to write a turgid business document that nobody will read. So what can you do to make sure that your report goes to the top of the pile, makes a lasting impression and demonstrates your firm’s proficiency and understanding?

- **What the client wants** - Your report should be client-centred, rather than consultant-centred.
- **Key messages** - An effective structure is to start with your main message and then provide the information that supports it.

- **Avoid jargon and ‘businessese’** - Take the time to find a more effective way of writing whatever it is you want to say. If using complex technical terms is absolutely unavoidable, make sure you provide a glossary in the appendix.
- **Humans or robots?** - It is far more interesting and meaningful to read about organisations and individuals taking actions than to read about all sorts of actions and events mysteriously occurring.
- **Count your words** - Beware of words and expressions such as ‘record’, ‘significant’, ‘considerable’ and ‘wide section of the community’ unless you can actually quantify them.
- **Painful punctuation** - We notice words and language and how people use them; pulling up people for poor punctuation, dodgy spelling or dubious grammar is almost a national pastime. And the likelihood is that your client will have a similar awareness of language – and irritation with its misuse.
- **Navigation tactics** - Only information that is essential to your client should go in the main body of the text; any information that is ‘important’ or ‘of interest’ should be relegated to appendices, footnotes or a separate chapter. Additional detail, figures, references or diagrams are all examples of ‘important’ information. Put yourself in your client’s shoes. How would you react to a report if you felt your valuable time was being wasted on nonessential detail?
- **Executive summary** - this may be the only part the real decision-makers read, so make sure it can stand alone and that it contains real information, including hard facts and figures. If your report includes recommendations, the executive summary should make it clear what these are and include their implications, values and costs.

If your report is well-written, it will influence your client’s thinking and decisions and galvanise them into action. <http://writing-skills.com/report-writing-for-consultants>

## Writing Reports - A Guide for Community Mobilizers

### Monitoring and Report Writing

In any workable project design, there are specific steps (ie define problem, generate goal, specify objectives, identify resources, choose a strategy, implement, monitor, redesign as needed), and monitoring is a necessary part. Just as we can not ride a bicycle unless we can see where the bicycle is going, so also we cannot stay on track with a community project unless we "see" where the project is going. That "seeing" is monitoring the project, and communicating it to the contributors and decision makers. The monitoring of progress of any project or activity must be therefore be integrated with its planning and implementation. It is therefore included in community management training. Monitoring should be done by the community members themselves, by all other actors represented by the signatories of the community contract, and by or on behalf of the several donors, by all who contributed and participated in the community project. How to monitor, and how to institutionalize monitoring and assessment, is part of the community management training. Trainers as facilitators must draw out of community members (eg through brainstorming sessions) what should be monitored. If any one factor can contribute to early paralysis and cancelling of community activities, it is the suspicion of misuse of resources; "thus endeth sustainability."

<http://cec.vcn.bc.ca/cmp/modules/rep-why.htm>

## Community Project Reports

A detailed monthly narrative report should include how far each of the intended objectives have been reached, what were the reasons they were not fully reached, any lessons learned, and suggestions and reasons about changing the objectives if they were found to need changing.

The narrative report can include information about events and inputs (what actions were undertaken, see below), but should emphasize outputs (the results of those actions in so much as they lead to achieving the stated objectives). Attention should be paid to the number and location of beneficiaries. The monthly report would best be organized into sections corresponding to the sections of the proposal. <http://cec.vcn.bc.ca/cmp/modules/rep-rep.htm>

**This table indicates that many different actors benefit from well written reports, and so that when reports are written, they should be written with those readers in mind.**

<b>Table 1: Who Benefits from Reports?</b>	
<b>Who Benefits?</b>	<b>How Do they Benefit from Reports?</b>
The author(s) of the report	Through writing, the author(s) learn skills (how to organize ideas, how to write), identify weaknesses, identify failures and successes, and identify strengths (many hidden until written). Writing (itself) improves assessment abilities.
The community engaged in the project	Just as "seeing" helps the driver of a car check on its speed and direction, so a community "sees" its progress through monitoring and reporting. Results (reaching desired objectives) make community members feel happy and encouraged (to do more) (especially verbal reports).
Any other community	By seeing or hearing about a community's progress, people in any other community get their awareness raised; they learn that such things are possible. When they read or hear about the community's achievements, they are also given courage (encouragement) to undertake their own community projects.
Researchers	Researchers can use well written reports as sources of research data.
Donors and contributors	Donors and contributors can learn how their donated money, labour, land, or donations in kind are being used, by reading or hearing reports. Remember that all the community members are donors. Do not think that only outsiders are donors.
Government: Central, District, and Local	Community project reports and mobilizers' reports help by providing vital information that is needed for informed and effective planning, at the central, district and local level of Governments. As in the other cases above, reports are also a source of encouragement, useful to Governments as well as others.

Here is a matrix that relates mobilizers' usual objectives with what should be included in mobilizers' reports.

<b>Desired Results</b>	<b>Actions Taken</b>	<b>Per Cent Achieved</b>	<b>Reasons Why</b>	<b>Factors Affecting</b>	<b>Hindrances</b>
Unify a Community	Meetings to explain benefits; workshops	(estimate this and describe)	How willing is the community? How skilled is the mobilizer?	Awareness level, Meeting facilities, Education.	Social schisms, factions, lack of animation skills
Help Community to Assess itself	Training workshop about assessment	"	How willing is the community? How skilled is mobilizer?	"	"
Help Community to determine its priority problem	Animation meeting to set priorities	"	How willing is the community? How skilled is mobilizer?	"	"
Help community to define its goal and refine it to specific objectives	Management training; brain storming	"	How willing is the community? How skilled is mobilizer?	"	"
Help community to identify its resources	Brain storm session	"	How willing is the community? How skilled is mobilizer?	"	"
Help community to generate strategies and choose one	Brain storm session	"	How willing is the community? How skilled is mobilizer?	"	"
Help community to form executive committee (CBO)	Organizational meeting (election or consensus)	"	How willing is the community? How skilled is mobilizer?	"	"
etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.	etc.