

The Design Research Report



SUPPLEJACK™

Why is reporting such a challenge?

Reporting should be **simple and easy**. But when people are concerned about learning effectively, it's easy to **complicate** things to make sure all bases are covered.

A good report gets straight to the key points. It helps you clarify **what** you must do to achieve your goals. Just as important, it helps you understand **how** to achieve them and **why** doing things this way is vital to your success.

Here's how to develop **simple, robust, effective** reporting.

This tool draws on Barbara Minto's *The Pyramid Principle: Logic in Writing and Thinking* (1987, 2002). ISBN: 0960191038

Why a design research report?

We think of reporting as written, but design researchers also use pictures, diagrams, videos, models and other means to **communicate** insights and ideas to you.

So reporting actually happens **throughout** the project as a two-way process. As the design researcher learns, she/he communicates with you so progress can take place in a timely way. **Ongoing, streamlined** reporting moves the project ahead, and frees up time for more useful tasks.

So the role of a final report is simply to **document** the project's insights, solutions and decisions.

What questions will you have?

As a client you are likely to have four basic questions of the design researcher. Exploring these and their implications during the project is vital to your success.

1. Who? Who is the customer? What have we learned about them?
2. What? What is the idea or opportunity? What should the developed product or service do? What might this look like?
3. How? How should the developed product or service work? What might this look like?
4. Why? Why should the product or service work in this way? What are the outcomes of this for customers (and yourself)?

What topics might a report cover, in what order?

You can explore three questions to help build a more effective final report.

1. What is the big picture? What does the challenge and its solution look like overall? This is a few sentences or a diagram.
2. What are the major, easy-to-understand-and-use results? What results will your team be able to understand and use immediately? This is a list or table with brief explanations.
3. What results are complicated or might complicate things? What are the complications, and how and why are they so? These are paragraphs stating a problem, solution options, reasons why some solutions work better, and giving a recommendation.

What might your reporting look like?

In design research, the final report summarises learnings, solutions and decisions. Here's how it might look.

1. A short, simple overview of key learnings, solutions and decisions (or recommendations) of a few pages only. A bullet-point summary of this is on the front page.
2. A discussion of complications and other details in a subsequent section, exploring problems, options, pros & cons and decisions (or recommendations). Includes quotes, pictures, diagrams and other ways of communicating results effectively.
3. A succinct outline of the methods and tools used during the design research project to document how learnings arose.

Please help us by providing feedback about this tool. You can do this by completing this brief, 6-question Survey (http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/Supplejack_Tools) or by contacting us directly.

Thanks for your interest!

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