

Writing file 5

Writing a report

1 Work with a partner and discuss these questions.

- 1 Do you write reports for work? If so, what was the purpose of the last report you wrote and who was it for?
- 2 Do you ever receive reports at work? If so, who are they from and what are they about?
- 3 Have you ever written a report in English?

2 Read the report. What is the purpose of the report? Who do you think will read this report?

This report reviews the performance of YP logistics, the company we have used to deliver our orders for the past year. The findings are based on an analysis of delivery times, a survey conducted with key customers, and feedback from staff in our customer services department.

Efficiency

We found that 88% of deliveries arrived on time. Of the remaining 12%, 5% arrived the following day, 4% arrived after two days, and 3% failed to arrive. *Although* these figures compare fairly well with competing logistics companies, they could still be improved. *In fact*, these results could have a negative impact on our brand image since we guarantee fast delivery times on our website.

Tracking

Staff from our customer services department are generally satisfied with the online tracking facilities provided by YP logistics. When a client calls enquiring about a delivery, they are able to find out when it was dispatched and can let the client know. *However*, they would also like to be able to find out the estimated time of delivery so that they can pass this information on to clients. Other logistics companies are already able to provide this kind of information on their tracking systems.

Customer service

There have been a number of complaints from customers about orders that have been left on doorsteps or with neighbours without prior permission or subsequent notification. *In addition*, some orders have arrived damaged or have failed to arrive at all. The survey we conducted found that a significant majority of customers would prefer deliveries to be made in the early morning, before they leave for work.

The service provided by YP Logistics is satisfactory, although improvements could certainly be made. Before we renew a contract with them, it would be worthwhile looking into potential alternatives. In addition, it would be in our interests to aim for certain improvements in their performance before we commit to another year.

Before renewal of the contract, I recommend that the following steps be taken.

- 1 Research other logistics companies. Look into the costs, performance levels, reputation, etc.

2 Approach YP Logistics regarding contract renewal. Based on the research into other companies, attempt to negotiate a more cost-effective contract. As part of the deal, request the following:

- improvement in 'on-time' deliveries from 88% to 93%
- improvement to their tracking website – we would like to see information on estimated delivery time
- option for early morning deliveries
- a clear policy about what to do when the customer is not in to take the order.

3 The report is split into the following four sections. Can you identify where each section starts? Write the section headings on the report.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1 Introduction | 3 Conclusion |
| 2 Findings | 4 Recommendations |

4 Read the report again and answer questions 1–4.

- 1 What tenses are used in the introduction? Why?
- 2 Which section of the report has the most modal verbs (*could, should, would*, etc.)? Why?
- 3 Which section of the report has the most examples of the present perfect? Why?
- 4 Which section uses imperative forms? Why?

5 Look at the words in *italics* in the report. They are linking words that are often used in formal writing such as report writing. Work with a partner and decide which word

- 1 means *but*?
- 2 could be replaced by *despite the fact that*?
- 3 means *in reality*?
- 4 means *and*?

6 Your company has started to use a new catering company to run the staff restaurant (their contract runs for another six months). You conducted a staff survey. Read your notes. What action would you recommend?

Survey findings

Not as much choice as there was with previous company.

Quality of food is clearly lower – several complaints received about the quality of meat used.

Questions raised about the hygiene standards – plates seem unclean and salad in the salad bar appears old.

Fewer healthy options available – no fish and fewer vegetarian options, too many processed meat dishes offered (e.g. sausages, pies, burgers).

7 Write a report about the situation for your boss. Include an introduction, findings, conclusion, and recommendations.