



Business Brief

Business briefs are a form of communication meant to bring a decision-maker (usually a high-ranking executive) up to speed on some issue or situation that needs attention. Briefs strive to present all the relevant facts and considerations that the reader will need to make a fully informed decision, but do so concisely. The trick, therefore, is to make the business brief succinct while also making it complete.

1. **Organization:** Although the organization of business briefs may vary, briefs generally contain an opening, a body, and a conclusion.
 - A. The opening identifies the situation or issue at hand and why it is important. If there is a recommendation to be made, it is introduced here.
 - B. The body summarizes the facts and considerations, and provides the following:
 - I. All of the relevant history necessary to fully understand the situation or issue, if your audience is not already aware of it.
 - II. Information on the current situation.
 - III. Explanation of how and why the company got to this point, if it is direct.
 - IV. Comments on what is needed.
 - V. Objective analysis of relevant information to back up claim of what is needed.
 - C. The conclusion recommends a course of action from the current point in time and provides a summary of the analysis or explanation.

2. **Characteristics:** Although briefs will vary depending on the material, all briefs are written in a style that is direct, concise, and clear. The specific audience, purpose, and topic will determine the choices that a writer makes when drafting a brief, but here are some general considerations to bear in mind:
 - A. Although business briefs may include a recommended course of action, you should strive to present the key questions and facts in a neutral, factual way. Slanting facts to fit the eventual recommendation, or adopting an argumentative or emotional tone, could undermine your credibility. A brief isn't about your opinion, rather what should happen based on research.
 - B. Although you should be formal, avoid dense prose and puffed-up language. Your goal is to inform your reader and lead him or her to a decision.
 - C. Respect your audience's time. A brief should be informative but not ponderous. It should be easily read at a brisk pace. Although it is hard to generalize, a business brief, as the name implies, is typically short—maybe a couple of pages, or longer if the issue is particularly complicated.