



The conventional role of annual reports is to provide a comprehensive account of the company's activities in the preceding financial year to shareholders. But many companies have also cottoned on the fact that it is a very useful branding tool.

For those embarking on their first annual report project, this factsheet gives a general overview about the various aspects of producing an annual report you should take note of.

Pictorial representation

The annual reports of today look more like coffee-table books, enticing people to pick them up with their stylish covers and marvel at the photos within. Few people actually have the time to devour the content cover-to-cover. Hence, companies have caught on the strategy of using photos to sustain interest. Coupled with bold captions, photos tell the story you want to deliver in a succinct yet effective manner.

Have in mind a theme for your annual report and convey it to your designated photographer. A theme provides an anchor for the entire publication and will set the mood for the photos.



Tip: If budget is a concern, you might want to consider purchasing stock photos instead of engaging a photographer. You can get professional-looking photos even with a modest budget.

Design ties everything together

The right use of colours, fonts and layout helps to emphasize the information you want to enhance or downplay information that is less popular with stakeholders. Photography, together with design ties in strongly with the branding of your company. The look and feel of the report projects the image you want the general public to identify your company with.

Getting Started on your First Annual Report



Tip: Do pass your corporate style guide to the design team so that the design adheres to the corporate image.

The flow of words

Working with experienced copywriters allows you to present information in fluent English and a professional tone. Copywriters can also help with the writing of the director's speech and come up with impactful quotes to complement the photos.



Tip: To streamline workflow, it may be easier if you organize the information and do a simple write-up and then get copyeditors to edit the text for errors. This way you might have more control over the presentation of the text.

Mode of presentation

Most companies are introducing both web-based and printed annual reports. They are either uploading their annual report online or producing CD-ROMs for mass distribution. Web-based annual reports reduce clutter and are environmentally-friendly. However, a solid printed copy remains the preferred choice for investors. The likelihood of them paying attention to your report also increases when they have a hard copy that they can physically flip through.



Tip: You can still be environmentally friendly even if you opt for hard copies. Use FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) or recycled paper for your annual reports.

Translate for a wider audience

If you have stakeholders in other countries, you might have to localize your annual report in the applicable languages. This is a strategic gesture that your investors will definitely appreciate.



Tip: For annual report translation, work with professional in-country translators with solid financial knowledge as this is usually the most technical part of the annual report with no room for misinterpretation.

The components that make up an annual report are varied and can seem intimidating if you're just getting started. How then can you integrate the different elements seamlessly or ensure great communication when working with different vendors?

The good news is that you don't have to. Leave that job to an experienced global content management service provider instead. With their varied capabilities and expertise, your organization's professionally produced annual reports will amaze your stakeholders.

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With a global team of native, in-country linguists with subject matter expertise in over 26 industries, Verztec offers premium quality language services at competitive prices.

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