Creative Accounting

TED Treasury Advisory   |   25-27 November 2019, Montenegro
Making financial reports worth reading

PURPOSE OF REPORTING

Help management make business decisions to drive improvement.
Understanding your audience

- Who is the report for?
- What information do they need?
- How experienced are they at reading data?
- How often do they need the information?
- What data or facts do they need?
Deciding what to report

- Use strategic objectives to drive reporting
- Reports should be appropriate to the level of team and decision-making
- Ensure separate reports are interconnected
Accommodate different thinking styles

- Strategy - identify strategic goals or business objectives
- Keep it simple - show performance visually
- Supporting analysis – if required
- Add a commentary - draw attention to key data points
- Only present information that will guide decisions

[Bramson, R, 1994, Coping with Difficult Bosses]
COMMENTARY: The school had been making good progress towards its goal of increasing pupil numbers to 160 until it received a poor inspection report in 2018, leading to a number of parents removing their children from the school. Recommended priorities for dealing with reasons for leaving — (1) deal with failed points on inspection report [medium difficulty, high impact]; (2) find ways to add value so that fees can be justified [high difficulty, high impact]; (3) improve teaching quality [moderate difficulty, low impact]; (4) no action regarding families moving away [high difficulty, low impact].
Get into the habit of continuous improvement...

- What went well?
- More of this…
- The “Even Better If…” technique
- Less of this…
- Even better if…
COMMENTARY: Overall weekly visits to Centre of Influence remain very low. Personal finance workshop runs every 4 weeks and appears to be a popular topic as it increased number of visitors, but poor reviews have led to gradually falling numbers. The charity shop is required to work towards being financially self-sustaining. Need to work on evangelistic strategy following activities.
DESIGN – think about colours, avoid old PowerPoint templates, use the slide master to create custom slide design

TEXT – only use 2-3 fonts, keep it short, limit unnecessary punctuation (e.g. !)

GRAPHICS – avoid clipart, use high quality photos, use design ideas, use guides to align objects

ANIMATIONS – only use 2-3 types, speed up default times, only use animations to strengthen message

TRANSITIONS – only use 2-3 types, speed up default times, only use transitions to strengthen message
Presenting like a Pro

- Practice, practice, practice – with a timer, in front of the mirror, with practice audiences
- Vary your sentence length, modulate your voice, slow down and pause more often
- Take a deep breath and lighten up your mood
- Fake it ‘til you make it – move slowly, speak clearly, smile, etc.
Hidden intelligence

As human beings we already have an innate ability to:

- learn through insights
- recover from setbacks
- solve problems through creative thinking
Emotional Intelligence

The ability to recognise, understand and use information about emotions in oneself and others
Effective Leadership is about...

“taking people with you as you strive to do the right thing and make a positive impact on the world around you”

Leo Lee (ACCA President, 2017-2018)
In summary, as a financial leader, you are already a…

Understanding your audience
- Who is the report for?
- What information do they need?
- How organized are they at reading data?
- How often do they need the information?
- What data or facts do they need?

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Get into the habit of continuous improvement
- What went well?
- What should be done differently?
- The “Even Better If…” technique

PowerPoint skills
- DESCRIBE - think about colours, avoid PowerPoint templates, use the slide master to create custom slide designs
- TEXT - only use 2-3 lines, keep it short, link unnecessary presentation (e.g., hyperlinks)
- GRAPHS/IMAGES - avoid clutter, use high-quality images, use designs that have pages with slide designs
- ANIMATIONS - only use 2-3 times, speed up default, only use animations to complement content
- TRANSITIONS - only use 2-3 times, speed up default, only use transitions to complement content

Effective Leadership is about…
“Taking people with you as you strive to do the right thing and make a positive impact on the world around you.”
Les Lee (NCCA President, 2017-2018)

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