**Business reports: Presenting the facts**

1. A business report provides an analysis of a topic and generally consists of four main sections. Use the expressions from the box to write a definition for each section.

was gathered \* ~~explains~~ \* discusses \* a course of action \* the significance of the results \* the purpose of the report \* explains \* the data or \* other information collected \* and suggests \* describes \* how the information in the report

Introduction: explains ........................................................................................................

Procedure: ...........................................................................................................................

Findings: .............................................................................................................................

Conclusions and recommendations: ....................................................................................

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

1. Read the following report. What is the author’s function in the company and what are his reasons for writing the report?

**To:** Jerome Quest, CEO

**From:** Brad Shields, VP HR

**Subject:** Staff-related cost-reduction measures

**Date:** 1 March 2024

**Introduction**

With reference to the email of 8 February 2024, this report on staff-related cost-reduction measures is submitted. As requested, the company’s HR policies concerning working hours were examined in order to determine whether there is potential for cost-reduction measures that would not involve laying off staff. The report focusses on the measures involving a voluntary reduction of working hours and the introduction of unpaid leave. Both of these would lead to savings in wage costs without creating redundancies.

**Procedure**

The questionnaire prepared for this purpose (see Appendix) was sent to all the company’s 350 employees exploring their readiness to voluntarily reduce working hours or take unpaid leave. Replies were received from 252 workers, i.e. the response rate was 72%. A breakdown of the responses by gender and age group can be found in the Appendix. Following the analysis of the questionnaire results, an in-depth interview was conducted with 50 of the respondents chosen at random concerning their willingness to change their working hours.

**Findings**

The major findings are as follows: with regard to the voluntary reduction of working hours, the attitude was on the whole positive. This was especially the case among women. In the 30-40 age category, 65% of the women expressed interest in reducing their working hours for a limited period of time, provided this would have no negative effect on their careers. The interest in unpaid leave was less widespread. However, in general 25% of the total workforce said they could imagine making use of such a measure at some time in their career.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

Given the importance a large proportion of the workforce places on work-life balance, it can be expected that models of reduced working hours as well as unpaid leave will meet with acceptance and would be utilised. It therefore appears safe to say that the introduction of both measures will contribute considerably to cutting staff costs. In view of this, it is strongly recommended that as of 1 June 2024, the company officially offer the option of reduced working hours or unpaid leave. Possible models are described in the Appendix.

1. Read the *Procedure* section again and find the words meaning the following:
2. a tool in an opinion survey .......................................................................................
3. the percentage of people replying ..............................................................................
4. classification ............................................................................................................
5. including many different aspects ..............................................................................
6. a person answering a question in an official situation ...............................................

**Business reports: Formal language**

1. Read the report on pages 1-2 again. How does the author of the report say the following in more formal and less personal language? Underline or highlight these in the report.
2. ... to find out if we can save money without firing people.
3. I prepared and sent a questionnaire to all of our staff ...
4. We talked at length to 50 of the people who had replied to the questionnaire ...
5. ... said they would like to cut their work time as long as their careers don’t suffer.
6. Fewer people wanted to know about time off without pay.
7. ... taking these steps will go a long way to help reduce wage costs ...

**Formal style**

Formal language uses typical features that make it less personal, e.g.:

* The passive instead of the active voice
* Avoidance of personal pronouns
* Nouns and nominal constructions instead of verbs
* Longer words and constructions than colloquial speech

1. Find examples of the features described in the *Formal style* box in the report.
2. The highlighted phrases in the following report are too informal or personal. Use the word groups in the box to replace them with more formal equivalents. Change verb forms or nouns when necessary. You also need to add some articles, prepositions and modals.

account for / slightly / more than half / total membership

afraid of / sanctions / employers

can be found / appendix

explore / attitudes

investigate / possible causes for

major factor / failure / workers

there is / lack / information / general public

alarming drop / union membership

what benefits / union / provide

with the purpose / educating / workforce / on

**Introduction**

In recent years, there have been fewer and fewer people who want to join our union. In view of this, a group of consultants have been asked to find out what is behind this trend and examine the options for reversing it.

**Procedure**

The consultants have analysed the structure of the current membership. They also conducted a survey of non-unionised workers in five different industries to ask how they felt about unions. For this purpose a specially designed questionnaire was used (see Appendix).

**Findings**

The age group 49-65 makes up a bit more than half of our members. Only a quarter of the membership is under 40, while the group 20-29 accounts for a mere 10%. A complete breakdown according to age, gender, job type and ethnic group is in the Appendix.

Non-unionised workers gave various reasons for not joining the union. The most frequent was that they did not know what a union could do for them. Some said they had never been asked; others were scared their bosses might punish them if they joined a union.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

It seems certain that the public doesn’t know enough about unions, which is a big reason why people don’t join unions. It is therefore suggested that an advertising campaign be created to tell working people about the benefits of union membership. It would be particularly effective to target young people in part-time jobs or those working on limited contracts.