Frequency of Progress Reports

Progress reports can be written at any regular interval, even annually. Your specific job and your employer's needs will dictate how often you have to keep others informed of your progress. Anna Beth Rowe was asked to submit two progress reports, the first of which is found in Figure 14.4. Contractor Dale Brandt determined that three reports, spaced four to six weeks apart, would be necessary to keep Dr. Burke posted; Figure 14.5 (page 570) is the second of those reports.

Parts of a Progress Report

Progress reports should contain information on (1) the work you have done, (2) the work you are currently doing, and (3) the work you will do.

How to Begin a Progress Report

In a brief introduction,

- indicate why you are writing the report
- provide any necessary project titles or codes and specify dates
- help readers recall the job you are doing for them

If you are writing an initial progress report, supply brief background information in the opening. Anna Beth Rowe states the purpose and scope of her work in the first paragraph in Figure 14.4.

If you are submitting a subsequent progress report, inform your reader about where your previous report left off and where the current one begins. Make sure you clearly specify the period covered by each report. Note how Dale Brandt's first paragraph in Figure 14.5 calls attention to the continuity of his work.

How to Write the Body of a Progress Report

The body of the report should provide significant details about costs, materials, personnel, and times for the major stages of the project.

- Emphasize completed tasks, not false starts. If you report that the carpentry work or painting is finished, readers do not need an explanation of paint viscosity or geometrical patterns.
- Omit routine or well-known details ("I had to use the library when I wanted to read the back issues of *Safety News* that were not archived on the Web").
- Describe in the body of your report any snags you encountered that may affect the work in progress. See Anna Beth Rowe's explanation of replacing a planned interview subject, or Dale Brandt's section on electrical problems in Figure 14.5. Ethically, the reader needs to know about trouble early in the project, so appropriate changes or corrections can be made.

How to End a Progress Report

The conclusion should give a timetable for the completion of duties or the submission of the next progress report. Give the date by which you expect work to be completed. Be realistic; do not promise to have a job done in less time than you

TO: Professor Marisol Vega
FROM: Anna Beth Rowe
DATE: March 21, 2015
SUBJECT: First Progress Report on Research Report

This is the first of two progress reports that you asked me to submit about my background report on the ethical issues involved in using apps in m-commerce.

Clearly states purpose of report

From February 6 until March 20, I gathered information from library holdings, the Internet, and one interview. Of the sixteen references listed in my proposal, I've so far found only thirteen. The text by Patricia Porter (*Technology and Risk*) and the article by Sara Holes ("Watch for Hotspots when You Use Your Apps") are not available at our campus library, and I'm working with Document Delivery to receive these texts as soon as possible. One of my Internet sources, *blogspot365.com*, has been down for the past several days, but according to their webmaster, service should be restored in the next 4–5 days.

Provides updates by citing individual references and actions taken

On March 18, I had an extended interview (1½ hours) with Katrina Kuhn, a marketing specialist and M-security consultant. She gave me some helpful handouts from her m-commerce seminars, as well as a copy of a webinar presentation she'd recently delivered on how consumers can better safeguard their privacy when using mobile apps — which I hope to include in the research for my report.

Details results of primary research

Because of an extended trip to Denver, Paul Goya could not meet with me. At his suggestion, though, I am trying to schedule an interview with Robert Sims, the manager at Mobile General here in Springfield. Sims has made numerous sales presentations and in-house briefings on the mobile apps his company developed to improve customer service and provide better monitoring. Even if Mr. Goya cannot meet with me, Ms. Kuhn gave me a great deal of information about the legal and ethical foundations of m-commerce. Also, there is a chance I might interview Jen Holka at Tech Consultants in early May when her schedule clears. Not currently having the secondary sources listed above may temporarily slow, but not stop, my work.

Gives detailed descriptions of steps in the research process

Anticipates problem

Starting tomorrow, I will begin my report and will submit my final copy May 1. As you requested, you will receive a second progress report and a draft of my research report on April 3.

Concludes with next steps

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April 29, 2016

Dr. Pamela Burke
1439 Grand Avenue
Mount Prospect, IL 60045-1003

Dear Dr. Burke:

Begins with key information: project status

Here is my second progress report you asked me to submit about the renovation work being done at your new clinic at Hacienda and Donohue. I am pleased to report that work proceeded satisfactorily in April according to the plans you had approved in March.

Recaps activities for background

Review of Work Completed in March
As I informed you in my first progress report on March 31, we tore down the walls, pulled the old wiring, and removed existing plumbing lines. All the gutting work was finished in March.

Summarizes current accomplishments

Work Completed During April
By April 4, we had laid the new pipes and connected them to the main septic line. We also installed the two commodes, four standard sinks, and a utility basin. The heating and air-conditioning ducts were installed by April 8. From April 11–15, we erected soundproof walls in the four examination rooms, the reception area, your office, and the laboratory. Throughout your clinic we used environmentally safe (green) materials. To further conserve energy, we installed solar panels on the roof, as you requested.

Attention to greening the building

Identifies problems, how they were solved

Problems with the Electrical System
We had difficulty with the electrical work, however. The outlets and the generator for the laboratory equipment required extra-duty power lines that Con Edison and Cook County inspectors had to approve, which slowed us down by three days. Also, Midtown Electric failed to deliver the recessed lighting fixtures by April 22. Those fixtures and the generator are now installed. Nevertheless, the cost of those fixtures increased the material budget by **$5,288.00**. But the overall cost for labor remains as we had projected—**$94,550**.

Specifies work remaining

Work Remaining
The finishing work is scheduled for May. By May 13, the floors in the examination rooms, laboratory, washrooms, and hallways should be tiled and the reception area and your office carpeted. By May 16, the reception area and your office should be paneled and painted. If everything stays on schedule, touch-up work is planned for May 16–20. You should be able to move into your new clinic by May 23.

Projects successful completion

You will receive a third and final progress report by May 16. Thank you again for the confidence you have placed in our company.

Promises to keep reader informed

Sincerely yours,

Dale Brandt

Dale Brandt

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know it will take. Readers will not expect miracles, only informed estimates. Even so, any conclusion must be tentative. Note that the good news Dale Brandt gives Dr. Burke about moving into her new clinic is qualified by the words "If everything stays on schedule." He also employs the "you attitude" by thanking Dr. Burke again for her business.

EMPLOYEE ACTIVITY/PERFORMANCE REPORTS

An **employee activity/performance report** informs your boss about what you did during a specified period (weekly, monthly, quarterly). He/she will expect you to explain how you managed your time and fulfilled the requirements of your job. Accountability is a major objective in the world of work and, as we saw in Chapter 1 (see "Ethical Requirements on the Job," pages 27–29), employers closely monitor employees, even online. An activity report is a vital indication of an employee's performance. Your supervisor or manager will want to know about the specific tasks you accomplished, how many of them, when, and why, as well as any ongoing projects in which you are involved. Activity reports will play a role in assessing your job performance and determining whether you should be promoted.

Figure 14.6 (page 572) shows an employee activity report written by Carey Lewis, an administrative assistant, for his supervisor, Beth-Anne Prohaska. Note how he classifies his accomplishments into four major categories and provides an honest, objective, and concise explanation of what he has done and why. Each of Lewis's accomplishments squares with his job responsibility.

Guidelines for Writing an Activity Report

To write a reliable and efficient activity report, you need to document what you have done. Keep track of your accomplishments by using an electronic or hard copy log, recording and saving job-related duties and correlating the hours you spent on a project with your timesheets. Here are some guidelines to follow when you write an activity/performance report:

- **Use the format that your employer or agency dictates.** This might be a special form, a memo, an email, or an email with an attachment, such as an annotated day-to-day calendar.
- **Make sure you are honest, objective, and accurate.** It is unethical to misrepresent what you did—for example, saying a job took longer than it did or exaggerating the number of tasks you actually performed. Do not claim credit for tasks you did not accomplish or finish. But do give credit to coworkers with whom you collaborated, as Carey Lewis does in Figure 14.6.
- **Describe your major accomplishments.** Quantify and give dates, if necessary. But be careful that you do not dwell on smaller duties ("I answered the phone every day") at the expense of omitting tasks that demonstrate your writing, organizational, and collaborative skills at work.
- **Be sure that each of your accomplishments squares with your job description.** Indicate how your performance meets the goals your employer set for