

Problem-Solving Report Format

Ideally, a Problem-Solving Report is akin to a decision memorandum. A Problem-Solving Report must be thoroughly researched and be richly accompanied by endnotes.

A good Problem-Solving Report will have the following parts:

1. Executive Summary

A short abstract of the paper content including all the Problem-Solving Report parts

2. Problem Background

A. History of the Problem, B. Current Status of the Problem, C. Importance of the Problem, D. Definition of the Problem.

Introduction to the problem. Keep it short and to the point. This section frames the issue.

3. Problem Statement

A. Identify the objectives of the entity that is trying to solve the problem and the Statement of the Problem, B. Statement of Methodology Used in Analysis, C. Identification of Actors Involved, D. Impact of the Problem

It concisely identifies the problem to be solved. It may be in the form of a question.

4. Alternative Solutions

A. Listing of Alternatives Considered, B. Comparison of Alternatives, C. Constraints, Including Political

Enumerate the options and describe them briefly. It is common to provide three options, but don't force it to that. For and against arguments do not constitute two options. Give the decision-maker some choices. **Analysis of Options** How does each option serve the objectives listed above and what are the other cost issues associated with each. Consider positive and negative externalities. You should be sensitive to the options' domestic political repercussions.

5. Recommendations

A. Description Recommendation(s), Rationale for Recommendations, Plan for Implementation, Provisions for Monitoring/Evaluation

Select the best option and recapitulate why it is the best. Do a reality check. Does the recommendation solve the problem; is it actionable? Your recommendation should ideally be a stand-alone, and not require another iteration of the process to figure out how to implement it. A good recommendation is never a suicide pact.

6. References

7. Appendices