

Effective Content for Annual Reports

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Having worked in the marketing department of a large publicly-traded company, I know the importance of the annual report. Both the copy and the creative elements can have a great impact on investors' or, in the case of non-profits, donors' decisions to hand their money over to your organization.

What is the best way to package the information? What do investors or donors want to see? Are online versions as effective? What information outside of the financial results should be shared about your company? These questions and more were answered by a survey performed by WithumSmith+Brown and published by MGT Design, Inc.

In this survey 102 investors, securities analysts, and portfolio managers were asked a series of questions related to what they wanted to see in an annual report. Here is a review of some of the results.

- ⊙ 90% felt that an annual report should cover important issues outside of the immediate financial world. These could include changes in the marketplace, environmental issues, etc.
- ⊙ 81% preferred that the annual report be presented as a printed piece instead of online. They still appreciated the tactile interaction of a physical report.
- ⊙ 78% believed that an annual report could be used for purposes other than delivering financial information. The majority of these people stated that the additional information could include statements on the philosophy and positioning of the company.
- ⊙ 77% believed the annual report to be the most important publication that a company produces.
- ⊙ 66% had a preference for reports that included photos and/or illustrations.
- ⊙ 50% said that spending money on an aesthetically-enhanced design was acceptable as long as the company was fiscally sound at the time.

If this information is helpful and you would like to read more details, download the complete findings at

<http://www.withum.com/pressReleaseFiles/Annual%20Report%20Survey%20Results.pdf>