

# Revealed: the nine secrets of integrated reporting success



Merging ESG considerations in your core business strategy is known as integrated thinking. An integrated report is the outcome of integrated thinking. The report shows how your company's strategy, governance, performance and prospects create value over the short, medium and long term.



## The nine secrets of integrated reporting

Going digital (an online PDF, a reporting microsite, or both) will help you reach a broader audience, allows you to offer more engaging content (e.g. interactive infographics or video), and will give you data-driven insights into how your report is actually being read. It also saves printing costs and is better for the environment.

A good materiality assessment is the foundation of integrated reporting. It aims to uncover the non-financial risks and opportunities most important (i.e. material) to your business and stakeholders.

A planning workshop to kickstart the integrated reporting process is essential. Use the opportunity to gather a wide range of internal views, encourage ownership, review best-practice examples, and explore the themes and priorities of the report.

Understanding how people actually read reports is key. Most will dip in and out (only 12 percent read cover-to-cover), which means each section should stand on its own merits. Prioritise your report's navigation, agree on the messages you want readers to take away, and keep it short – technical content should be moved to fact sheets on the website.

Your integrated report should be useful throughout the year. It should be the first place you refer people to when they're looking for more company information, while design assets – like infographics, icons and case studies – should be reused in investor presentations, social media, workshops and web content.

Readers are time-poor, and social media has helped to shorten attention spans. Your integrated report must capture and hold their interest. Storytelling is one solution. Put yourselves in the shoes of the reader. What will appeal to them? What are they looking for when they read your report? What might they be pleasantly surprised by? What might distract or annoy them?

Cliché-ridden language, especially greenwashing, will seriously impact your credibility. Write in plain English, use the active voice, avoid jargon and marketing spin, and only make a claim when you have evidence to support it.



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