

# **Technical Communication**

## **Examples of Forewords and Summaries**

# A little more detail. . .

- Foreword
  - Problem statement (often two sentences)
  - Task statement (your task or job)
    - Any Criteria
    - Any Constraints
  - statement of document purpose
- Summary
  - Actions taken
  - Findings
  - Implications
  - Conclusions
  - Recommendations (if needed)
- Discussion

Lets look at some overviews taken from

From Olsen, L. and Huckin, T. (1991).

*Technical Writing and Professional  
Communication, 2nd Ed.* New York:  
McGraw-Hill, Inc.

## **Foreword**

Slowdowns and necessary repairs have occurred in the incineration area of the Sewage Treatment Plant, costing \$2 million last year alone. These problems may have occurred because of inaccurate data on the amount of sludge cake being produced and delivered to individual furnaces. Thus, Dennis Moore, the Chief Project Engineer, requested that I investigate our data on sludge cake production and suggest improvements in monitoring it if those are necessary. The purpose of this report is to document the unreliability of our present monitoring technique and to recommend a better one.

**Olsen and Huckin, p.107.**

## **Foreword**

In your letter of July 7, 1989, you asked me to suggest a treatment process for the wastewater from your new citrus processing plant. You stated that any treatment process selected should

1. Exhibit performance effectiveness under average and adverse flow conditions
2. Exhibit cost superiority in terms of initial cost and yearly spending

Consequently, I have compared several treatment alternatives using the data you have supplied and your criteria as a basis for comparison. The purpose of this report is to recommend a process for economically and efficiently treating processing wastes.

**Olsen and Huckin, p. 238**



## Summary

An aerated lagoon is recommended as the most efficient and economical method for treating citrus processing wastes. Several treatment processes were considered in the selection. These include the activated sludge process, the anaerobic lagoon, and the aerated lagoon. The advantages of the aerated lagoon over the other treatment processes are as follows:

1. The aerated lagoon is the only alternative which could meet the federal pollutions standards under adverse flow conditions. It exhibits significantly better performance under all conditions through more consistent BOD reduction and higher organic loading potential.
2. The aerated lagoon affords significantly lower initial and yearly costs due to its ease of construction, operation, and maintenance. Per lagoon, the estimated initial cost is only \$114,000 and the annual operating cost \$22,800, approximately half as expensive as the more economical of the other two options.

So, where are the elements in the foreword?

- Problem
- Task
- Purpose

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**Olsen and Huckin, p.107.**

## Recall the elements of a summary

- Actions taken
- Findings and conclusions (implications)
- Recommendations (if applicable)

**In the examples that follow, the different sections of the forewords and summaries are colored red to make them easy to spot.**

## Summary

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**Olsen and Huckin, p. 238**

# Summation: the memo

- Header

- Overview

  - Foreword

    - Problem statement (often two sentences)
    - Task Statement (your task or job)
    - Document Purpose statement (the purpose of the report)

  - Summary

    - Actions taken
    - Findings
    - Implications
    - Conclusions
    - Recommendations (if needed)

- Discussion ( “Details”)