

# Some Key Elements for Designing an Annual Report

Annual reports can be two pages or 20 pages, depending on your message, your audience, your time and your budget. At first glance, readers should be able to tell:

- They're reading a publication from the library
- It is an annual report.



The library's name should be in large print (24 to 30 point) and bold. If you have a logo or a slogan, place it near the top of the page. Use slightly smaller print (18 point) to describe the publication as an annual report.

## **Annual reports may include:**

- A letter from the director or the board president with a summary of the past year. Include highlights and challenges.
- A narrative of the year-in-review. Mention highlights from the past year, but don't repeat information used in the letter from the director/board chair.
- Circulation and other use information. Use charts and graphs to tell the story. You can avoid a lot of verbage and get the message across quickly.
- Financial information. What you decide to report will reflect your main audience. If your report is targeted to the general population, simple financial data focusing on broad general areas will get the message across quickly. An annual report published as a fund-raising tool should include a list of donors and their contributions. If you're writing a report to distribute to funding authorities, think about the kinds of information they're looking for.

## **Layout and Design Tips**

- The nameplate (across the top of the page) should be 24 or 30 point bold.
- Headlines should be 18 point bold. Use 10 or 12 point type size for articles.
- Type styles: Headings should be the same type style. The body of the report should also be the same type style throughout. Arial or Helvetica are good choices for the body.
- Use lines or boxes to organize stories and enhance readability.
- Use clip art sparingly and be sure it is relevant to the article.

- Use graphics and photos. Make sure they are sharp! A blurred photo distracts greatly from a publication. Avoid grip and grin photos. Take pictures that tell a story (people involved, interacting. Someone sitting in a new comfy chair reading.)
- Keep sentences short, simple and to the point.
- Use bullets.
- Use white space. A page full of print and graphics can be overwhelming. Think of white space as breathing room for the eyes.

Have someone proofread the report.

- Does she understand what you've written?
- Do your stories "flow?"
- Is the report appealing to look at it?

Double-check numbers, whether it's telephone numbers or circulation stats.