

Five Quick Tips to Help Your STAR Report Shine

Yes, the STAR is mostly internal and can be tedious at times, but it's used to generate our Annual Report, Board Reports, Priority Report, Shareholder Report and other important presentations. The more polished and presentable your submitted content, the more polished and presentable your department will be perceived by key stakeholders and decision-makers!

With that in mind, here are a few tips to boost the effectiveness of your monthly STAR report:

- **Keep it brief:** In the words of Josh Linkner, "Make your message concise [...] the lower your word count, the better your message will be understood and retained."
 - **Instead of...** For the purposes of better understanding the relationship between credit unions and millennials, we plan to study the effects of radio on perception.
 - **Use...** We will study the effects of radio on millennials' credit union perception.
- **Use an active voice:** The active voice generates stronger statements than the passive voice. In the active voice, the subject is doing something. In the passive voice, the subject is having something done to it (e.g., John threw the ball vs. The ball was thrown by John).
 - **Instead of...** Major growth was experienced by the program in the second quarter.
 - **Use...** The program generated major growth in the second quarter.
- **Use third-person point of view:** For use in the Board Report, Priority Report and quarterly shareholder videos, everything needs to come from the central voice of CUSG. Avoid "we" and "our," and refer to your department in the third-person point of view.
 - **Instead of...** We continue to work with FocusIQ on a marketing plan.
 - **Use...** Technology Solutions continues to work with FocusIQ on its marketing plan.
- **Know and control possessives:** This is especially tricky when referring to a company, department or division. While a group is made up of multiple individuals, the group is usually a singular entity. This impacts the use of "its" versus "their."
 - **Instead of...** Corporate Marketing continues forward with *their* FocusIQ initiative.
 - **Use...** Corporate Marketing continues forward with *its* FocusIQ initiative.
- **Know and control the tense:** There's a time and a place for past, present and future tense. Aristotle taught us that past establishes *responsibility*, present establishes *value* and future establishes *choice*. Be aware of which you're using and avoid mixing verb tense.
 - **Instead of...** The team *continued* to review options as they *search* for new partners.
 - **Use...** The team *continued* to review options as they *searched* for new partners.

Don't hesitate to reach out to the Corporate Marketing team for further guidance concerning composition or grammar — if they don't know, they'll find the right answer, right away!