



## Guide To Planning Your Annual Report.

Producing an annual report is a demanding project at a busy time of the year so we've put together some useful tips for you to help the process go smoothly and ensure you create an exceptional report.

Breaking the process into a clear sequence of tasks will help take all the stress out of working on this important document.

### 1. Scheduling

**Work backwards from the date you need your annual report distributed** and create deadlines for each stage.

**Factor in plenty of extra time** so you don't have any last-minute problems. Every person involved in the process needs time to prepare their part of the document – especially you.

Schedule plenty of dedicated time to go over each section as it comes in, so you don't end up doing late nights when the final draft is due.

Fatten up your time frame with a little contingency planning too, for those unexpected problems.

**Use our free Annual Report Design Planner** as a guide for scheduling.

### 2. Commission your graphic designer, photographer, printer and mailing house early

Annual Report season is a busy time for the best creatives and printers. Booking yours in early not only secures the best, they can also be planning their contribution well before the content arrives.

Having time to discuss the process, particularly the layout, is a big plus. It's also good to have these elements in mind while you're compiling the content as one considerably affects the other.

### 3. Meeting #1

**Think about your key objectives.** A clear set of criteria to brief all your contributors with will minimise content conflicts and motivate them to produce an excellent report. Having everyone communicating the same message will bring consistency and make for a more effective piece of communication.

**Review last year's report:** what do you like, what don't you like; what worked, what didn't? Use the stand-out elements as your base and build on last year's successes.

**Create a content outline.** Annual reports don't have to be boring, they're an opportunity to grab your reader's attention

and reflect the heartbeat of your company. Think about what makes your company successful, brainstorm clever ways with your designer, printer and photographer to reflect your core values. Allow your creative team to suggest ideas you may not have thought of, use their skills to create something that will stand out.

**Finalise the contributors and the schedule** and make sure everyone knows what they're contributing and when it has to be on your desk.

**Set the budget.** Once you've finalised your budget, talk to your print specialist about how to get the best value in your print production. Small changes can often lead to a higher quality product.

### 4. Meeting #2:

**Discuss the design concept**

Use dynamic ways to tell your story. There are many ways to convey information, it doesn't have to be all facts and stats; compelling photos, illustrations and infographics can communicate as effectively as words. Scatter them throughout your report to give the reader a break from reading words.

Discuss the concept for your cover, text, images and diagrams.

### 5. Discuss print options with your print specialist and determine the look and feel of the final product

Variables such as the size of your report and the quantity you need will determine how the report is printed. Your printer should be experienced enough to advise you on the best print production options to suit your design concept, budget and deadlines.

They should also be equipped to manage the mail-out of all your documents and coordinate their production.

Knowing how the finished product will look and feel before you start can have a big impact on the design process. A chat with your printer before you get started will be a great help.

### 6. Brief your design team and key contributors, and set their deadlines

Make sure your design concept and key objectives are understood by the whole team and everyone is working to the same goal. Written briefs for each person helps them stay on track and is a clear reminder of their own deadline.

### 7. Gather your images and ideas

Collect images in a mood board like Pinterest or collect stock images in a lightbox in sites like Shutterstock, Bigstock and

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## PRINT



gettyimages. Start an ideas file and save them all as possible material for your first draft. You never know what clever idea will enhance your project.

### 8. First Draft

This is the draft you prepare in-house. Don't worry if it looks a bit rough, it's your opportunity to get a feel for how the finished product will look, to assess the concept consistency, check all the content is complete, and to make corrections.

Proofread this version carefully. This is the best stage to get all the details right. A good idea is to give your contributors a section that they didn't work on to proofread so you have fresh eyes on every component.

### 9. Final Draft

This draft is your final chance to proofread and make sure everything is correct. Pay careful attention to previous changes and make sure they've been done correctly.

Have your supervisor sign off on every page. It will help ensure the final product is completely correct and ready to go to print.

### 10. Printing

Ask your printer for colour proofs and check them carefully. These are for checking print quality, not for rewriting content. No changes can be made at this stage without further artwork and time costs.

Also ask for a pre-bind sample. That's all the pages before the binding process and is what your finished pages will look like. This helps you check things like page numbers and that the sections are all in the correct place.

### 11. Distribution

If you have a good printer, they can take care of the final delivery to you or to your mailing house. If not, you'll need to arrange all that in advance. This takes time out of someone's day so make sure you've organised this vital last-minute step, especially if you have a lot of reports to produce that will need a large vehicle to transport.

### How can Glide Print help you?

We offer a full production service including top quality, affordable design and can coordinate the printing and distribution of your Notice of Meeting and Proxy Forms too.

### Advice

We've been involved in the design and printing of annual reports for twenty years. We're happy for you to use our expertise to produce a report you'll be proud to distribute.

### Design

We have experienced graphic designers who will work with you to produce a report that properly reflects your company's values and achievements and positively present your year to your shareholders.

### Print

We produce all types of print in any quantity you need. We're print specialists. We don't handle a limited number of print options, we handle all of them. If you can think it up, we can print it.

- Digital
- Offset
- Envelopes
- Die cuts
- Special finishes and Effects
- Notice of Meeting and Proxy Forms
- Small or large quantities
- Variable data print

### Finishing

- Inserting
- Folding
- Collating
- Packaging

### Distribution

- Shipping
- Mail-outs

Contact Glide Print today for a no-obligation chat about how we can help you get a jump start on producing an outstanding annual report.