A Progress report is a report in which you are updating information to your management about a project. Progress reports also make it possible for management and clients to stay informed about a project and to change or adjust assignments, schedules, and budgets. These types of reports are used for projects that have many steps from onset to completion and are issued at regular intervals and are meant to provide management and customers with information about the status of the project.

The purpose of the progress report is to provide updates on ongoing projects. The audience of the progress report is usually management or clients.

Note: If you are sending your progress report within your company, send a memo, but if it is going outside of your company, you should send a letter.

Formatting: The progress report has an introduction, body, conclusion, and recommendations and, if you are sending the report within your company, you may use an e-mail or memo. If you are sending it outside of your company, you should send a business letter. Hint: Create a template of your first progress report for the entire project and use that template for each consecutive report after the first. Incorporate headings and subheadings to organize the report and maintain the same headings for the duration of the project. You can divide the headings under Project information, Costs, Work Completed, and Work Schedule. Not only will this organization make reading the report easier for your audience, but it will also help keep you on track while writing the report.

Subject Line: Be explicit—Progress Report for XXX July 14, 2011—you will include the subject line in all forms of communication—e-mail, memo, or letter. Even if you are not sending a report but merely sending an email or message for the purpose of asking a question or making a comment, use the subject line with the project name.

Introduction:

- The title of the project
- The date
- The names and titles and contact information of the participants
- Project status summary
- Provide general information about the schedule and cost, and expected completion
- Reveal if you are on schedule or behind etc.
- If this is the first progress report of the project, you will identify the project, methods used, materials, cost, and completion date
- After the first report, your introduction will contain only a transitional introduction that briefly refers to the first report.

Body:

- Detailed status of the project
- Cost to date as far as materials, labor
- An estimate of the remainder costs of materials and labor
- Work completed section
  1. Details what you have done up to that point
  2. Details what you have left
  3. Work schedule that details what you will do between certain dates
  4. Complications you may foresee
5. Include tables, graphs, drawings, or charts to assist your audience members understanding of the information and in presenting the organization of schedules

Conclusion:

- Summarize and predict your schedule.
- Provide the future steps
- Provide the reasons for the delay
- Explain when you will be on track again or push the completion date back

Recommendations:

- Recommend actions related to your schedule
- Request for the next group of resources and workers
- When they can deliver the specific machinery or tools or materials

Note: If you are reporting good or bad news, your job in the report is the same: you provide a clear and concise account of your activities. Do not become defensive or develop an attitude that can be seen as hostile or defensive. Even if you are behind schedule and you receive communication that can be seen as reprimanding, remain professional and do not engage in contentious communication. There are instances where you may be tempted to either withhold information or mislead your reader. This is unethical. Always respond honestly. Even if the deliverable isn’t what you thought, without being defensive, describe the events that led to the conclusion and explain how the deliverable will be different than what you expected. If you are running out of time, explain why you are behind and give a new time. If you are going over budget, you must report this and explain why you need more money.