



**Solutions en  
philanthropie et  
communication**

[espaceidees.ca](http://espaceidees.ca)

## **How to Spice Up Your Annual Report**

Does your organization's annual report seem unoriginal and overloaded with uninspiring content? We have a few ideas of things you can add to encourage supporters and partners to read your annual report from start to finish!

### Necessary Elements:

- Message from the President/Executive Director: this could even be a combined message to save space, to demonstrate collaboration and avoid repetition. Be concise!
- A summary of the organization's mission and services.
- Collaborations and partnerships: ideally in point form, again to save space.
- Statistics, using tables and graphics for fast reading.
- Accomplishments/changes in the past year, presented using visuals.
- Listing of staff members, board of directors, different committees and possibly volunteers if feasible.
- If it's not necessary to include financial statements in your annual report, summarize financial information and add a message such as: "Financial statements are available upon request."

### Interesting Elements:

- Impact messages: ask donors, service users, volunteers, etc. to share their stories and provide testimonials. These can then be used on the first page to grab the reader's attention.
- Demonstration of the difference your organization and donors are making through the use of quantitative and qualitative data (statistics, infographics, survey results, different testimonials).
- Thank all stakeholders involved with your cause. Thank you messages must be sincere, authentic and heartfelt.
- Present financial equivalents. For example: "Without donations, the service would cost \$x for service users," or "Our services allow the government to save \$x."
- Demonstrate what donations are used for. For example: "Each donation of \$x allows us to..."
- It is more and more common in annual reports to present key people involved with the organization in interview format.



**Solutions en  
philanthropie et  
communication**

[espaceidees.ca](http://espaceidees.ca)

- Don't be afraid to use visuals. An image speaks louder than text. You can use photos taken throughout the year to demonstrate your organization in action. If it's too difficult to take pictures for confidentiality reasons, research other appropriate images. It all starts with the picture on the front cover.
- Layout is equally important to facilitate reading and to be visually attractive. It's OK to have white space. Ask someone with some graphic design know-how to give you a hand.

Finally, make sure your annual report isn't too long (eliminate content if needed) and that it can easily be shared electronically and added to your web site. Organizational culture, a sense of belonging and engagement are key elements that must stand out when reading your report.