



Office of Inspector General

Getting the Message Out

Reports that Achieve Action



Homeland
Security



Office of Inspector General



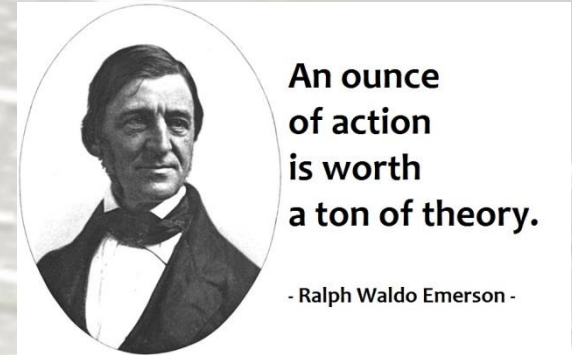
Agenda

- Why “Getting the Message Out” Matters
- Building a Report to Achieve Action
 - Identifying the Action Needed
 - Identifying the Audience
 - Organizing Information
 - Bringing in the Professionals
 - Quality Control
- Last Words





Why it Matters



- **OIG mission**
 - Effect change to ensure efficient and effective operations and programs
 - Inspect and evaluate operations and programs that may be at risk of waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement
 - Develop a strong message using clear and persuasive language
- **With poor communication, our work may go unnoticed and unheeded yielding neither impact nor action**



How Do We Get the Message Out

- Formal, Traditional Reports
- Non-Traditional Reports
- Blogs, Tweets, Podcasts

Every and Any Way We Can!



Building a Report to Achieve Action

- Begin with a strong message
 - Begin with the end in mind
- Identify issues and present results/findings accurately, concisely, clearly, and objectively
- Reach sound conclusions
- Recommend practical, quantifiable solutions to identified problems





Identifying the Action Needed

- What is most important?
 - You may identify multiple problems and have many recommendations
 - Decide which findings are critical or key to addressing the most significant problem(s)
- Who can do it?
 - And what will motivate them to take action?
 - Use appropriate, realistic, and transparent expectations

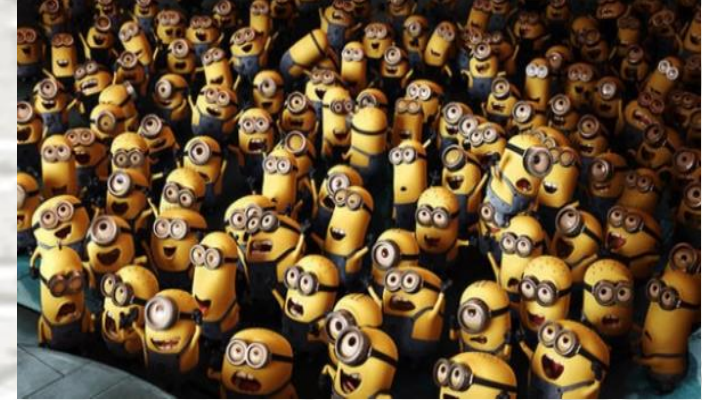


Take Action; Create Change



Identifying the Audience

- Potential Audiences
 - Political Leadership
 - Organization Leadership
 - Media
 - Public
- Who needs to know?
- Who can take or influence action?
- Which reporting method will best achieve the end result?





Organizing the Information

- Highlights (executive summary)
 - Concise narrative; do not use jargon or technical terms, limit acronyms
 - Organize results logically in a deductive structure
 - Bottom line up front
- Pay attention to sentence structure and develop unified, cohesive paragraphs
 - Tell a story
- Build coherent sections using charge paragraphs followed by details
 - Make the story flow logically and smoothly
- Pictures and graphics can help tell the story and convey the message
 - They can also be disruptive so chose carefully



Bringing in the Professionals

or The Best in the Office

- Communications Analysts
- Writer/Editors
- Graphic Designers
- Cold Readers
- Peer Review





Quality Control

- Independent Referencing
 - Including the conclusions
- Style and Templates
 - Understand organization's voice and presentation style
 - Follow editorial guidelines
 - Use proper grammar and punctuation





Example

All the allegations were adequately reviewed and routed within the office. In most cases, the office ensured that all aspects of investigations were fully addressed and reported on. All the results were fully documented. The overall quality of the office's reports was compliant in regard to the appropriate use and documentation of warnings, waivers, and rights advisements; the timeliness of an investigation from the date of receipt to the time of completion; and the reporting of the investigative results to the appropriate action official. The investigations were thoroughly reported in an unbiased manner.

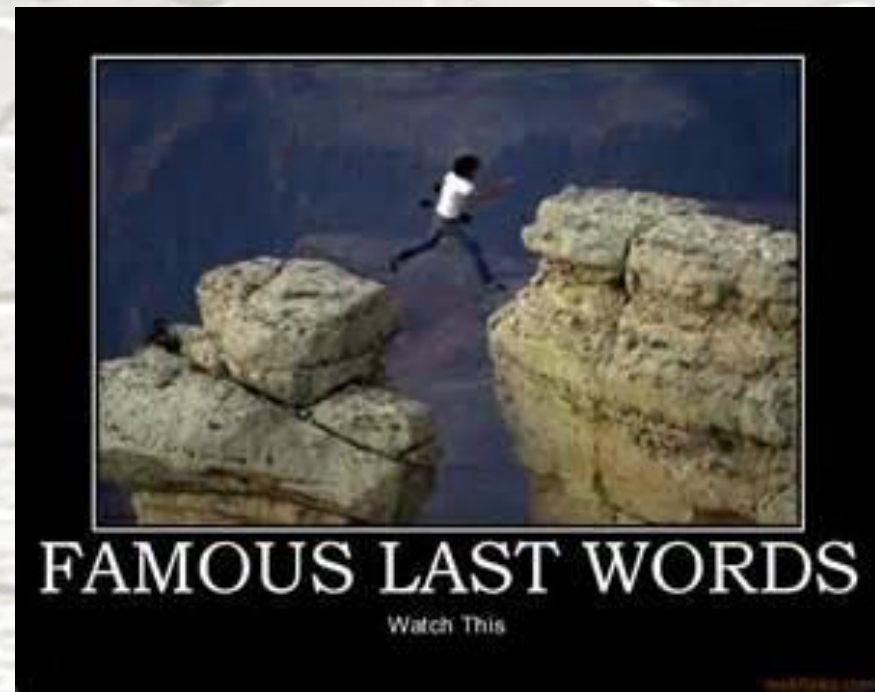
The office's reports were well written, addressed the misconduct investigated but not independent or unbiased. However, it was not always clear from the office's reports how and when the misconduct was initially discovered and forwarded to component management. The office aspires to complete its investigation and issue reports within a 120-day time frame. There are no definitive office standards requiring internal supervisory review or the submission of reports within a set timeframe. An inordinate amount of time sometimes passed from the completion of the final investigative step or a prosecutorial determination or result and the creation of the report. Of a sample of 50 reports reviewed, 8 were created over 1 month, and 5 over 2 months after the last activity.

A substantial amount of time sometimes passed in the report editing process, between creation of the report by the case agent and final signing of the report for submission to the appropriate recipient. Of a sample of 50 reports reviewed, 5 were signed by the office director more than 3 weeks after their creation. In some cases, it was not clearly documented in the report that appropriate rights warnings were administered.



Last Words

- Your reports are your ONE and ONLY product. They are your opportunity to bring positive change to your organization.
- Make Them Count!





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DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Questions?