

HOW TO SMASH

THE REPORTING BOTTLENECK

*The top 7 reasons why
Micorsoft Office is the
ideal **Report and
Document Generation**
template design tool*



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WINDWARD

Prior to using an Office-based report design tool, I spent half my time designing and scripting reports to meet the bank's requirements. Now we can lay out a report in Microsoft® Word and get immediate approval from the client.

—Santhi Swaroop Mohanty of Nucleus Software Exports

As a software developer, you work hard to provide your customers with an intuitive interface and bug-free functionality. Yet no matter how delightful the overall experience, one of most costly and time-consuming challenges you'll face comes when your customer struggles to use the reporting and document generation component.

Here's why: The frustrated customer needs a certain report and solicits the software developer's help. The well-meaning developer creates the report and sends it to the customer. Still dissatisfied, the customer provides additional feedback. The developer dutifully refines the report yet again. The customer, now expecting perfection, provides even more feedback to the beleaguered developer. And so it goes, ad nauseam. This is a true bottleneck.

It doesn't have to be like this. The key to a better approach is to use Microsoft® Office as the document design tool. Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint give your customers and the flexibility and features they need to create top-notch enterprise reports—fast.

Here are seven reasons why Microsoft Office is the ideal reporting and document generation tool.

Reason #1: You slash the biggest expense.

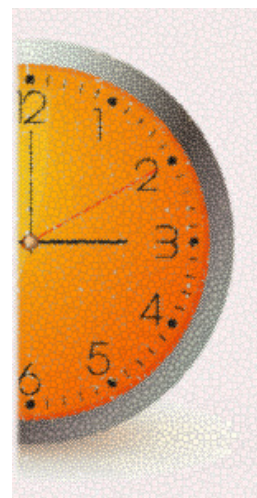
The true cost of a reporting or docgen solution depends on several factors, but the biggest factor by far is time spent designing templates. When you shorten the amount of time needed to create and modify templates, you slash the biggest expense.

Microsoft Office does exactly that with its easy-to-use interface. Want to insert a table? Just point and click. Need a company logo moved? Drag and drop it to the right place. Commands are right in front of you and simple to work with, so you save boatloads of time.

Reason #2: Familiarity breeds...time savings.

The more you use a program, the more familiar you become with its features and the faster it is to use.

This is a key advantage of using Microsoft Office to design reports and documents. Most end users already know how to format text, insert images, add rows to spreadsheets, and work with other tools useful for report creation. They don't need intensive training in a new program, so they can jump right in and design.



Microsoft Office allows you to design templates in less time.

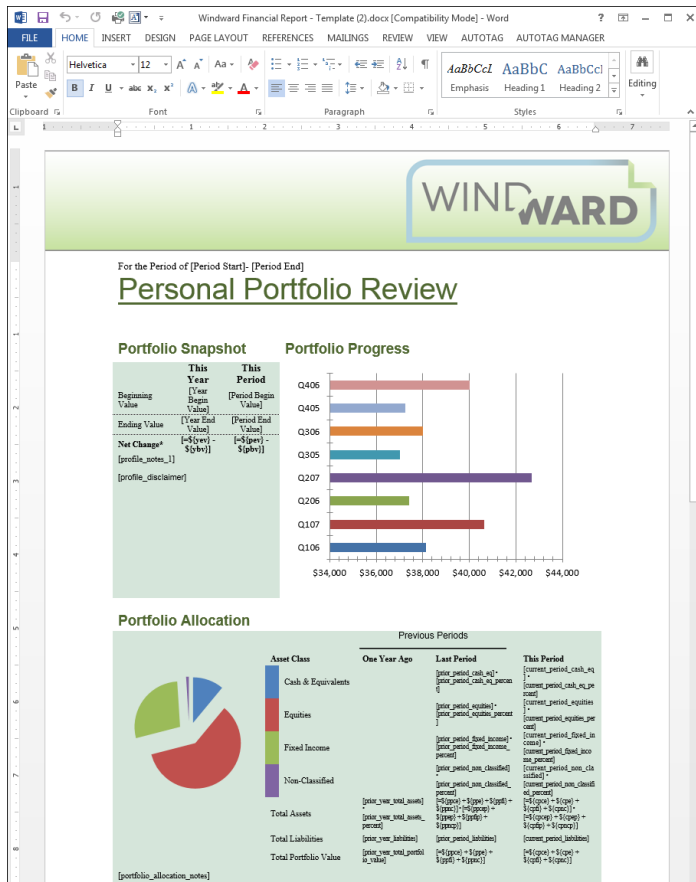
Reason #3: No more design restrictions.

Some tools restrict the template to “banding,” where elements of a report are confined to limited sections called bands. Not so with Microsoft Office. It is a non-banded (also called “free-form”) solution, so you can lay out elements as you wish. This gives you significantly more freedom and ensures the final report looks the way you want it to.

Reason #4: Practically “error-proof” reports.

When you use Microsoft Excel as the template design tool, you can take advantage of the many built-in features that keep data errors out of your reports, including:

- Automatic updates of data when other, dependent data changes (such as in sums)
- Data validation that controls the type of data or the values that users enter into a cell
- Conditional formatting for quick identification of data categories



Looking for a specific report formatting tool in this financial report? There isn't one. This report was formatted with Microsoft Word's built-in tools.

In addition, some Office-based template tools include Excel-type equations and functions in the Word and PowerPoint interfaces, as well.

Reason #5: Customers get output that meets their needs.

Let's face it: customers can be very picky. One needs a report as a PDF, another as HTML, and still another wants a spreadsheet she can manipulate.

When you design a report in Microsoft Office, you typically have the option of generating the output in Microsoft Office as well.

And some Office-based tools provide you with the freedom to generate PDF documents, HTML files, and many other output formats.

Reason #6: You can play well with others.

Creating reports in Microsoft Office helps break the cycle of needless iterations, but working with colleagues can be a GOOD thing.

Microsoft Office (2010 and higher) includes collaboration features such as real-time communications within a document, co-authoring of projects, and the ability to remotely access Office files.

Reason #7: You shut down the endless volley between end user and IT.

As we described earlier, there's an unnecessary back and forth between customer and developer. Picture a customer who needs a report. She asks you to create her one. It isn't what she envisioned, so she marks it up and asks for a new version. When your overworked IT person finally gets to it, once again it isn't exactly what our customer needs, and everyone goes through the process again. And again.

When your customers use MS Office as the report design tool, they don't have to wait on IT. They can design or edit the reports themselves, so they get what they need, when they need it. No more impediments to customized reports.

Why the Windward Solution?

You *can* smash the reporting bottleneck—when you use a Microsoft Office-based reporting and document generation component.

We invite you to take a look at one such application: The Embedded Solution from Windward Studios. At Windward, we believe that creating documents should be simple and that free-form template design is a must, but most of the solutions out there are overly complex and tedious.

That's the problem we set out to solve. Windward provides a unique experience using Microsoft Office to format and edit report templates. Behind the scenes, Windward's sophisticated engine pulls data from multiple sources and merges that data into your reports, creating a fast and hassle-free experience that can even make generating reports fun.

Windward delivers a solution that allows software professionals to design templates and your customers to customize those templates and create variations to meet their reporting needs. For details about the technology, its applications, and how it has been successfully deployed, please visit the [Windward Studios website for an overview video and free trial.](#)

About Windward

For businesses in document-intensive industries, Windward Studios is the document generation and reporting software company that empowers business professionals to create beautiful, professional reports.

Windward OEM and enterprise customers span over 70 countries and all industries, including financial services, insurance, energy, healthcare, HR and technology. We've been delighting customers since 2004.

Our primary products are AutoTag, a design tool that creates custom templates with Microsoft Office, and a Java or .NET engine that connects to virtually any data source.

Windward delivers exceptional support, training and documentation, with a 98% satisfaction rating from our customers. We're a Microsoft Gold Partner and an Oracle Gold Partner.

Smash the Reporting Bottleneck!

[Download a free trial](#) of Windward's products or [schedule a live demonstration](#).

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