


## Running Case Study 15

### Writing up



What a journey. After five months, Rebecca had finally typed the last word of her conclusion into her laptop. She was done – almost done. She emailed the thesis to her mother, who as a teacher had an eye for detecting any grammar and spelling mistakes. A few weeks earlier, her mother offered to proofread her project. Rebecca knew that her mother was incredibly good at detecting typos, but she was concerned that her mother would also comment on her thesis in general. A few months earlier, when she discussed her thesis topic with her parents at a weekend at home, her mother had given her a stack of books on ethics. According to her, these books would serve well to build a fundamental base for her thesis. Later Rebecca had a look at these books, but somehow these books were so different from the articles she had. In the end, she did not even use her mother's books, and she was afraid her mother would be disappointed to find no references to the books in the final draft. Just three days later, Rebecca's phone rang – her mother. Her mother told her that she had finished proofreading her thesis and that she would email it to her straight away. Then, she continued and said that she was very surprised reading the text, as its style and structure was so different from what she expected. The writing seemed to her very technical and straightforward. Although she did not understand it, she was impressed by the statistical analyses with all the Greek letters and formulas. Her mother concluded that for her the thesis was too technical and even a bit dry, but she supposed that this was the way scientific papers are written in the business field. Therefore, she corrected obvious language mistakes but also some style issues. For example, she was surprised that Rebecca had put so many sentences in the passive voice. Rebecca replied the passive voice is scientific, but her mother replied it is just bad style. Rebecca was not sure, as she once had heard that in scientific writing you never use the words 'I' and 'we'. She would need to check with her supervisor.

Her mother had really done a terrific job. Despite the fact that Rebecca had looked for typos in her thesis by reading it on screen and as a print out, her mother still had detected 15 more. In the meantime, she also started to improve the layout of the figures and tables. Her friend Joseph had shown her the deeper secrets of word processing and she applied them. It had already taken her two days to give her thesis a nice

layout and still she was not finished. What a waste of time she thought. But Joseph insisted that a text can never become better than its layout. Rebecca felt that, in the end, the content should matter and not the font type or how many colours you used.

Mehmet had almost finished his thesis as well. But before he handed in the printed version, the chairman of a local business round table invited him to give a presentation about his thesis at one of their regular meetings (which took place in the Hotel Ambassador, a nice four star hotel in the city centre). Mehmet was really looking forward to this meeting, as he knew that it was attended by very important business people – very important at least at the local level. Therefore, he invested a lot of time in this presentation, as it needed to be perfect to make an impression.

- 1 Rebecca asked her friend Joseph to help her with the layout of her thesis. How much work should you put in the layout of the thesis, given it is the content that should matter?
- 2 Looking at Rebecca's and Mehmet's final result as described in the cases, what made their research project special, i.e. what are the innovative or surprising parts?
- 3 In his presentation to local business people, Mehmet focuses on his most 'interesting' results. Would you also advise such prioritizing for presentation to business scholars?