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## On the Writing Strategies of Internal Reference Think Tank Reports: Postprint

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### Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Many social science experts are capable of writing academic papers but not internal-reference think tank reports, failing to meet the demands of think tank development. To enrich the theories of Chinese writing studies, official document studies, documentation studies, and think tank studies, and to enhance the construction level of think tanks, research on the writing strategies for internal-reference think tank reports is required. [Methods/Process] This study defines the basic types of think tank policy consultation texts, extracts the structural framework of internal-reference think tank reports, and presents the writing techniques for such reports. [Results/Conclusion] Internal-reference think tank reports offer six structural options—including three-segment, parallel, quasi-three-segment, two-segment, four-segment, and five-segment formats—and 27 content frameworks such as “problem+cause+solution,” requiring emphasis on carefully selected topics, refined expression, precise policy recommendations, concise length, and elegant presentation.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

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## On the Writing Strategies for Internal Reference Type Think Tank Reports

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## Abstract

**[Purpose/Significance]** Many social science experts are proficient in writing academic papers but struggle with composing internal reference type think tank reports, leaving them ill-equipped to meet the demands of think tank development. Researching the writing strategies for internal reference type think tank reports is essential for enriching Chinese writing studies, official document studies, philology, and think tank science theory, as well as for enhancing think tank construction standards. **[Method/Process]** This paper defines the basic typology of think tank advisory texts, refines the structural frameworks of internal reference type think tank reports, and presents practical writing techniques for their composition. **[Result/Conclusion]** Internal reference type think tank reports offer six structural options—including three-paragraph, parallel, quasi-three-paragraph, two-paragraph, four-paragraph, and five-paragraph formats—and twenty-seven content architectures such as “problem + cause + countermeasure.” Effective reports require careful topic selection, sophisticated expression, refined policy recommendations, concise length, and polished presentation.

**Keywords:** internal reference type think tank report; type and structure; writing techniques

**Classification Number:** G250

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Internal reference type think tank reports are applied documents that address strategic issues and public policy, providing professional decision-making solutions and policy recommendations for Party and government leaders. Although not classified as statutory official documents, they function as administrative papers that circulate upward through official channels. These reports hold unique value in the construction of new-type think tanks with Chinese characteristics. From the demand perspective, they serve as the primary mechanism for Party committees and governments to “utilize” think tanks, the main channel for leaders to “recognize” think tanks, and the principal standard for competent departments to “evaluate” think tanks. From the supply perspective, they represent the main expression form of think tank achievements, the primary mode for think tanks to exert influence, and the principal means to demonstrate think tank value. From the individual perspective, they constitute important research outputs for social scientists, significant manifestations of professional dignity, and key pathways for project completion. In reality, however, many experts and scholars excel at academic writing but remain relatively unfamiliar with think tank report composition, creating a substantial gap between their outputs and the needs of policy consultation, think tank function fulfillment, and value realization.

Research on writing strategies for Chinese internal reference type think tank reports—encompassing special planning texts, third-party evaluation reports, consultation meeting speeches, specialized lecture manuscripts, NPC and CP-

PCC proposals, as well as monograph-form special research reports, annual development reports, and economic and social development bluebooks—represents a foundational project for constructing theoretical discourse systems in Chinese writing studies, official document studies, and philology. Clarifying the paradigm differences between internal reference type think tank reports and academic papers is a crucial prerequisite for mastering report writing patterns. Essentially, these two genres represent distinctly different paradigms, with nine primary areas of divergence: (1) Academic papers center on disciplines, “originating from problems within theoretical systems” and “emphasizing disciplinary systems and their construction,” whereas internal reference reports center on decision-making, focusing on public policy formulation and external application issues—demonstrating substantially different objects of attention. (2) Academic papers emphasize interpreting the world, primarily investigating “why” and “what” questions, where “without profound explanatory mechanisms, they would be considered superficial and descriptive”; internal reference reports emphasize transforming the world, focusing on “what to do” and “how to do it,” enabling governments to “use them to solve problems.” (3) Academic papers prioritize truth-seeking, with outcomes primarily presenting theoretical principles and knowledge discovery; internal reference reports prioritize pragmatism, with outcomes manifesting as actionable policy tools. (4) Academic papers “cover everything in their research scope, offer great freedom in topic selection, and involve long time spans,” requiring investigation of marginal topics in obscure fields and encouraging “ten years of grinding one sword,” reflecting authors’ “academic sentiment” and free exploration; internal reference reports emphasize capturing hot topics and rapid response, reflecting “patriotic sentiment” and demand orientation toward current public policy processes. (5) Academic papers advocate complex argumentation, requiring specialized terminology, model frameworks, and methodological tools, demanding high professional thresholds from readers; internal reference reports require concise, accessible, and highly actionable language. (6) Academic papers are characterized by shareability, openness, and originality; internal reference reports feature strong directionality, restricted readership (sometimes limited to a single person), and often involve confidential content. They also emphasize the application and transformation of existing knowledge, making policy originality difficult to define. (7) Academic papers are evaluated primarily by peers, emphasizing theoretical value and “considering whether there are important theoretical and knowledge innovations, with stringent requirements for problem formulation, methodology, data, and other norms”; internal reference reports are evaluated primarily by users, emphasizing practical value and requiring policy recommendations to withstand practical testing—unrealistic or overly advanced suggestions are discouraged. (8) Academic papers typically study “a specific in-depth field,” emphasizing “innovation in a particular aspect”; internal reference reports emphasize comprehensive balance across dimensions, requiring consideration of political, economic, cultural, and social factors, and evaluating “leadership reading effects, departmental reactions, and implementation difficulties at the grassroots level.” (9) Academic papers are evaluated through “SCI-indexed publications,

core journal publications, readership, downloads, citations, and research awards (national or provincial)”; internal reference reports are evaluated through “leadership instructions, policy adoption, and positive influence on policy formulation.”

## 1. The Paradigm of Internal Reference Type Think Tank Reports and Academic Papers

Internal reference type think tank reports constitute one category of think tank reports. Broadly defined, think tank reports have various designations, including think tank reports, advisory reports, consultation reports, internal reference reports, think tank research reports, decision-making consultation reports, think tank special reports, think tank important reports, advisory special reports, advisory important reports, think tank investigation reports, countermeasure reports, and decision-making references. In ancient China, documents submitted by subjects to monarchs had different names: collectively called “shu” during the Warring States period; divided into “zhang,” “zou,” “biao,” and “yi” in the Han Dynasty, where “zhang expressed gratitude, zou impeached officials, biao presented petitions, and yi expressed dissent,” with “biao” being particularly representative; in the Ming Dynasty, they included ti, zou, biao, jiangzhang, shuzhuang, wence, jietie, zhidui, lubu, and yi; the Qing Dynasty added memorials that could reach the emperor directly. Modern Chinese scholars Chen An and Jia Chuanling categorize think tank reports based on their purposes into nine types: “echo wall feedback reports, ongoing event reports, interpretive policy reports, warning research reports, descriptive analysis reports, internal reference critical reports, evaluative suggestion reports, pieced-together industry reports, and encyclopedic annual reports.” While meaningful, this classification lacks logical rigor and practical guidance. I argue that defining basic types from the perspective of textual independence facilitates standardized writing, presentation of basic formats, and fulfillment of primary functions. Based on decision-making needs and practical exploration, internal reference type think tank reports encompass seven main types:

### 2.1 Policy Recommendation Type

This text type involves think tanks proposing countermeasures and suggestions to public institutions and decision-making departments regarding specific public policy issues. This is the most numerous and important type of internal reference report, embodying the core function of think tanks. Examples include “Analysis of Civil-Military Integration Strategies at Home and Abroad and Countermeasures for China,” “Implementation Status, Focus Analysis, and Countermeasures for Our Province’s Free Male Preschool Teacher Training Policy,” and “Urgently Establishing a Unified Protection System for Origin Names and Geographical Indications in Hunan.”

## 2.2 Investigation Report Type

This text type involves think tanks conducting investigations and research on specific events, experiences, or universal, fundamental, or incipient problems, as well as policy implementation at the grassroots level, and proposing countermeasures based on their findings. This type also constitutes a large proportion of internal reference reports. Examples include “Investigation and Research on the Closure of 20 Well-Known Foreign Enterprises in Suzhou,” “Strong Talent Makes Strong Think Tanks—An Investigation into the Construction of Research Teams in Hunan’s New-Type Think Tanks,” and “Seizing Development Opportunities to Expand a Trillion-Yuan Industry—Investigation and Reflection on Hunan’s Efforts to Develop Tourism Equipment Manufacturing.”

## 2.3 Situation/Information/Social Conditions/Public Opinion Analysis Type

This text type involves think tanks conducting regular or special situation analysis, dynamic analysis, and early warning analysis based on monitoring data. These reports feature important topics, strong professionalism, and high leadership attention, playing a significant role in enhancing think tank service effectiveness and expanding influence. Examples include “Analysis Report on Hunan’s Economic Situation in 2018-2019,” “Comparative Analysis Report on Economic Operation Between Hunan Xiangjiang New Area and National-Level New Areas in 2017,” and “Analysis Report on Public Opinion Regarding Poverty Alleviation in Hunan in 2018.”

## 2.4 Conference/Activity Summary Type

This text type involves think tanks summarizing forward-looking, innovative, and enlightening viewpoints from important forums, activities, think tank roundtables, and academic conferences they organize, and submitting them as special reports for decision-making reference. Examples include “Accelerating Civilized City Integration—Summary of the Theoretical Seminar on the Construction of the ‘Two-Oriented Society’ Spiritual Civilization Demonstration Zone in Changsha-Zhuzhou-Xiangtan” and “Summary of the 2019 Cultural Activities Entering Ten Thousand Households.” This also includes reporting to leaders on the intellectual achievements of certain activities in summary form.

## 2.5 Experience Reference Type

This text type involves think tanks summarizing and refining typical experiences, successful models, and innovative explorations from domestic and international work in specific areas for decision-makers’ reference. Such texts play important roles in overcoming reform and development challenges, promoting local pilot programs, and summarizing mature experience models. Examples include “Key Measures and Reference Suggestions for the Hong Kong SAR Government’s Business Environment Optimization,” “Deep Integration Paths for

Hunan's Talent and Industry from the Perspective of Huzhou Experience," and "Beneficial Exploration of Prioritizing Education Development in Poor Areas—Investigation and Reflection on Education Reform in Luxi County."

## 2.6 Event Response Type

This text type involves think tanks analyzing major domestic and international emergencies or hot-button issues from professional perspectives, examining their historical context, causes, future trends, potential impacts, and proposing scientific response measures. Such in-depth and professional current affairs analysis products often play crucial roles in clarifying misconceptions, assisting scientific decision-making, and eliminating cognitive blind spots at critical moments, consistently receiving high attention from leaders and decision-making departments. Examples include "Optimizing China's Personal Income Tax System from the Fan Bingbing Tax Evasion Incident," "Development Trends and Dispute Response Measures for China-US Knowledge-Sharing New Economy," and "Impact of Japan-Russia Strategic Approach on China and Countermeasures."

## 2.7 Reference Information Type

This relatively special text type is authored by think tank experts with copyright and intellectual property rights belonging to the scholars, but then processed, condensed, and refined by information departments of Party committees and governments' general offices. These are submitted to leaders as information or special reports, serving as political "breakfast" or essential briefings. Such think tank report texts are generally brief and concise. An example is "Recommendation to Promote Chinese Engineering Technical Standards in Countries Along the Belt and Road."

## 3. Basic Structures of Internal Reference Type Think Tank Reports

Through long-term practical accumulation and circulation, internal reference type think tank reports have gradually evolved a series of relatively fixed structural frameworks that conform to narrative logic and reading habits while achieving high expression efficiency. Summarizing these typical structural patterns offers significant practical value for understanding writing patterns, rapidly improving text quality, and better fulfilling advisory functions. The basic structural frameworks are roughly divided into six major categories encompassing twenty-seven variations.

### 3.1 Category 1: Three-Paragraph Structure

Texts with this structure divide the body below the introduction into three modules, with eleven primary content layout patterns. Patterns 1-5 are mainly used in policy recommendation, investigation report, and reference information

reports; Patterns 6-9 are primarily used in policy recommendation, investigation report, and experience reference reports; Patterns 10-11 are mainly used in social conditions/public opinion analysis and event response reports.

**Pattern 1: “Problem + Cause + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on specific problems, then analyzes their causes, and proposes corresponding countermeasures. Example: “Seed Industry Crisis: A Sword Hanging Overhead; Crisis Diagnosis: Unable to Overcome the Hurdle of Intellectual Property Protection; Breaking the Siege: Innovating the Seed Industry Intellectual Property Protection System.”

**Pattern 2: “Basic Situation + Cause + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first describes the basic situation of a decision-making problem, then analyzes its causes, and proposes corresponding countermeasures. Example: “Three Groups of People: Basic Situations and Main Demands; Analysis of Reasons for Continuous Petitions by Three Groups; Countermeasures and Suggestions for Resolving Historical Issues of Three Groups.”

**Pattern 3: “Situation + Problem + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first analyzes the domestic and international situation facing the topic, then elaborates on specific existing problems, and finally proposes concrete countermeasures. Example: “Mentally Ill Persons Causing Accidents Merit High Attention; Shortcomings in Compulsory Medical Supervision in Our Province; Countermeasures and Suggestions for Standardizing Compulsory Medical Supervision in Our Province.”

**Pattern 4: “Must Do + Can Do + How to Do” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on the necessity of adopting the recommendation, then explains the favorable conditions for implementation, and finally proposes specific implementation measures. Example: “Smoothing the Second Golden Waterway Delivers Significant Economic and Social Benefits; Conditions for Achieving Year-Round Navigation of the Second Golden Waterway Are Ripe; Countermeasures and Suggestions for Accelerating the Smoothing of the Second Golden Waterway.”

**Pattern 5: “Achievement (Practice/Experience) + Problem/Cause + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first summarizes achievements, effective practices, and successful experiences, then analyzes existing problems and causes, and finally proposes specific countermeasures. Example: “Encouraging Progress: Practices and Achievements in Hunan Think Tank Research Team Construction; Pressing Situation: Problems and Challenges in Hunan Think Tank Research Team Construction; Urgent Tasks: Countermeasures and Suggestions for Hunan Think Tank Research Team Construction.”

**Pattern 6: “Problem + External Situation/External Practice + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on specific problems, then analyzes external environments or noteworthy practices, and proposes countermeasures. Example:

“Hunan’s Talent Crisis Alarm Has Been Sounded, Fighting a Talent Defense War Is Imminent; Multiple Provinces and Cities Have Upgraded Talent Policies Aggressively, Intensifying Hunan’s Talent Crisis in a New Round of Talent Wars; Breaking Conventional Policy Means to Ensure Victory in Hunan’s Talent Defense War Under the Background of Dual innovation.”

**Pattern 7: “Significance + External Experience + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on the importance of the topic, then introduces successful external experiences and explorations, and finally proposes specific suggestions. Example: “In the New Era, We Must Re-recognize the Importance of Performance Management Reform; Looking Inside and Outside the Province, We Must Seriously Learn from Innovative Performance Management Experiences; Fulfilling the New Mission, We Must Advance Performance Management Reform with Problem-Oriented Approaches.”

**Pattern 8: “Characteristics/Practice + Enlightenment + Suggestion” Structure**

This structure first introduces successful external experiences and explorations, then explains their beneficial enlightenment for local departments, and finally proposes improvement suggestions. Example: “Main Characteristics of Henan’s Agricultural Industrialization Development; Several Enlightenments from Henan’s Agricultural Industrialization Development; Countermeasures and Suggestions for Accelerating Our Province’s Agricultural Industrialization.”

**Pattern 9: “Practice + Effect + Enlightenment/Suggestion” Structure**

This structure first introduces effective external practices, then summarizes their achievements, and finally provides enlightenment and reference for local implementation. Example: “Small Things Reveal Big Pictures: All Party Members Have Report Cards; Point-to-Area Expansion: New Changes Everywhere; Leading by Example: New Thinking in Everything.”

**Pattern 10: “Overall Situation + Focus Areas + Countermeasures” Structure**

This structure first summarizes the current overall situation of certain social conditions or public opinion, then analyzes several key areas requiring attention, and finally proposes countermeasures. For instance, in a public opinion analysis report on “Impact of China-US Trade Friction on Our Province’s Foreign Trade,” the author first analyzes the overall impact, then focuses on key concerns, and finally proposes countermeasures to mitigate effects.

**Pattern 11: “Overall Situation + Focus Areas + Risk Assessment/Future Trends” Structure**

This structure first summarizes the current overall situation, then analyzes key focus areas, and finally proposes future risks or trends. For example, in the “2018 Comprehensive Analysis Report on Provincial Education Public Opinion,” Part 1 covers “Overall Situation,” Part 2 “Hotspot Focus,” and Part

3 “Risk Assessment.”

### 3.2 Category 2: Parallel Structure

Texts with this structure, after briefly introducing background and origins in the lead, consist of three or more parallel modules in the main body, with each module potentially adopting some three-paragraph structures. Examples include conference summary reports: “One Carrier + Three Functions: Significance of ‘Civilized City Integration’ in Demonstration Zone Construction; Three Shortcomings + Two Deficiencies: Problem Manifestations; Four-Pronged Governance + Three-City Co-construction: Policy System.” Parallel structure is suitable for policy recommendation, conference/activity summary, experience reference, and some investigation report and social conditions/public opinion analysis texts.

### 3.3 Category 3: Quasi-Three-Paragraph Structure

Texts with this structure, after briefly introducing background and origins in the lead, divide the main body into two modules connected by a brief transitional passage. Three primary content layout patterns exist, with Patterns 1-2 mainly used in policy recommendation, investigation report, and reference information reports, and Pattern 3 mainly used in investigation report, experience reference, and reference information reports.

#### **Pattern 1: “Necessity + Transition + Suggestion” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on the significance and value of a topic, then uses a brief transitional passage before proposing suggestions. Example: “Building the Liuyang River Hunan Cultural Corridor Is a Wise Approach to Developing World-Famous Rivers; Building the Liuyang River Hunan Cultural Corridor Is a Wise Path to Creating Quality Changsha; Building the Liuyang River Hunan Cultural Corridor Is a Wise Shortcut to Releasing Cultural Dividends + Transition + Implement High-Level Coordination to Achieve City-Wide ‘One Chessboard’; Build Landmark Structures to Create ‘Eye-Catching’ Riverbanks; Activate Cultural Carriers to Achieve ‘Prosperous Development Along the Way.’”

#### **Pattern 2: “Problem + Transition + Suggestion” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on problems and deficiencies in a topic, then uses a brief transitional passage before proposing countermeasures. Example: “First, Insufficient Ideological Emphasis; Second, Policy Fragmentation; Third, Difficult Coordinated Promotion; Fourth, Inadequate Adaptation in Replication and Promotion; Fifth, Software and Hardware Environment Needs Improvement + Transition + Strengthen Centralized and Unified Leadership; Precisely Align with Enterprise Needs; Emphasize Resource Integration and Complementarity; Vigorously Improve Software and Hardware Environments; Increase Precise Guidance.”

#### **Pattern 3: “Practice (Experience/Effect) + Transition + Enlightenment” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on effective external practices, experiences, and achievements, then uses a brief transitional passage to derive enlightenment and references for local departments. Example: “Accelerating Industrial Chain Construction Created the ‘Jianghua Model’ for County Development Supported by Real Economy; Innovating Investment Methods Created the ‘Jianghua Phenomenon’ for Clustered Enterprise Development; Providing ‘Motherly’ Service Created the ‘Jianghua Speed’ for Project Construction; Advancing the ‘Dual Interaction’ Project Created the ‘Jianghua Sample’ for Poverty Alleviation Through Industry; Establishing Innovation and Excellence Mechanisms Created the ‘Jianghua Image’ of Daring, Hardworking, and Pragmatic Spirit + Transition + Reflection One: Different Speeds Reflect Different Opportunity Awareness; Reflection Two: Different Speeds Reflect Different Work Passion; Reflection Three: Different Speeds Reflect Different Innovative Thinking; Reflection Four: Different Speeds Reflect Different Mission Responsibility.”

### 3.4 Category 4: Two-Paragraph Structure

Texts with this structure divide the body below the introduction into two modules. Their greatest advantage lies in expressing more information within limited space, finding wide practical application. Four primary content layout patterns exist, with Patterns 1-3 mainly used in policy recommendation, investigation report, and event response reports, and Pattern 4 mainly used in investigation report, experience reference, and reference information reports.

#### **Pattern 1: “Problem + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on existing problems and then proposes countermeasures. Example: “Four Major Shortcomings: Basic Public Service Supply Faces Challenges; Scientific Precision: Four Measures to Optimize Public Service Supply.”

#### **Pattern 2: “Situation + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first analyzes the facing situation and then proposes countermeasures. Example: “New Trends in China’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Activities; Enlightenment for Hunan’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Activities.”

#### **Pattern 3: “Cause + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first analyzes the causes of a problem and then proposes countermeasures. Example: “Analysis of Reasons for Hunan’s Weak Fiscal Revenue Growth in First Half of 2019; Countermeasures to Suppress Fiscal Revenue Decline.” This structure requires necessary problem 铺垫 in the introduction.

#### **Pattern 4: “Practice (Experience/Effect) + Enlightenment” Structure**

This structure first introduces effective external practices, experiences, and achievements, then elaborates on enlightenment for local departments. Example: “Practice One: Special Emphasis on Education to Strengthen Lasting Momentum; Practice Two: Focus on Promoting Educational Equity to Solidify

the Foundation for Every Child to ‘Have Access’ and ‘Access Quality Education’; Practice Three: Innovate Education Systems and Mechanisms to Create a Good Environment for Every Child to ‘Access Education Easily’; Practice Four: Strengthen Vocational Training to Build a Cultivation Platform for Every Student to ‘Find Employment Easily’ + Enlightenment: Undertaking Endeavors Requires Establishing Correct Views on Achievements; Undertaking Endeavors Requires Wholehearted Dedication and Meticulous Effort; Undertaking Endeavors Requires Combining Reality to Identify the Right Starting Point; Undertaking Endeavors Requires Doing One’s Best Within One’s Means.”

### **3.5 Category 5: Four-Paragraph Structure**

Texts with this structure divide the body below the introduction into four modules. This structure suits longer research reports, with six primary content layout patterns. Patterns 1-5 are mainly used in policy recommendation and investigation report types; Pattern 6 is mainly used in public opinion analysis reports.

#### **Pattern 1: “Significance + Problem + Cause + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on the importance of work, then identifies existing problems and deficiencies, analyzes specific causes, and finally proposes relevant countermeasures. Example: “Analysis of the Importance of Grassroots United Front Work Under New Situations; Analysis of the Overall Weakening of Grassroots United Front Work; Exploration of Causes Leading to the Overall Weakening; Solutions to the Contradiction Between Rising Importance and Weakening Implementation.”

#### **Pattern 2: “Opportunity + Foundation/Conditions + Problem + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on prospects and opportunities, then inventories existing foundations and conditions, identifies problems and deficiencies, and finally proposes countermeasures. Example: “Industrial Prospects and Opportunities; Hunan’s Foundation and Advantages; Current Problems and Bottlenecks; Accelerating Development Countermeasures and Suggestions.”

#### **Pattern 3: “Significance + Foundation/Conditions + Problem + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on the significance and value of work, inventories foundations and conditions, identifies problems and deficiencies, and finally proposes countermeasures. Example: “Must: A Merit for Contemporary Times and Benefit for Future Generations; Inevitable: Strong Rise and Trillion-Yuan Prospects; Necessary: Advantages and Concerns Requiring Solutions; Must Do: Exerting Efforts at Strategic, Campaign, and Tactical Levels.”

#### **Pattern 4: “Work Progress + Problem + External Situation/Experience + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on current work progress and achievements,

then identifies problems and deficiencies, analyzes external developments or beneficial experiences, and finally proposes countermeasures. Example: “Progress of Our Province’s E-Government Project; Main Existing Problems; Central Requirements and Relevant Developments in Various Regions; Several Suggestions.”

**Pattern 5: “Current Situation + Impact/Harm + Cause + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first summarizes the basic situation of a negative phenomenon, analyzes its negative impacts and harms, examines specific causes, and finally proposes countermeasures. This structure is primarily used in social conditions and public opinion analysis reports. Example: “Basic Types, User Groups, and Main Motivations of Internet Slang; Real-World Harms of Internet Slang; Causes of Internet Slang Popularity; Response and Guidance of Implicit Public Opinion.”

**Pattern 6: “Overall Situation + Hotspot Focus + Trend/Risk Assessment + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first summarizes the overall situation of certain public opinion, analyzes main focus areas, assesses future trends and risks, and finally proposes countermeasures. This structure is also mainly used in social conditions and public opinion analysis reports. Example: “Overall Characteristics of Poverty Alleviation Public Opinion; Current Hotspot Focus; Trend Analysis and Assessment; Suggestions for Public Opinion to Support Poverty Alleviation.”

### 3.6 Category 6: Five-Paragraph Structure

Texts with this structure divide the body below the introduction into five modules. This structure is often applied in longer reports, with two primary content layout patterns mainly used in policy recommendation, investigation report, and situation analysis reports.

**Pattern 1: “Significance + Foundation/Conditions + Problem + External Situation/Experience + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on the importance and value of a matter, inventories existing foundations and conditions, identifies problems and deficiencies, analyzes external situations or experiences, and finally proposes countermeasures. Example: “A Key Move for Future Victory; Basic Situation of Rapid Development; Development Shortcomings Urgently Needing Solutions; Reference Practices and Experiences; Countermeasures and Suggestions for Leapfrog Development.”

**Pattern 2: “Problem + Foundation/Conditions + Work Progress + External Situation/Experience + Countermeasure” Structure**

This structure first elaborates on problems and challenges, inventories foundations and conditions, outlines measures taken and progress made, analyzes external situations or experiences, and finally proposes countermeasures. Example: “Guangxi Faces the Situation of Possibly Being Forgotten in World Her-

itage Applications; Guangxi Has No Excuse for Unsuccessful World Heritage Applications; The Autonomous Region Government and Cultural Departments Have Done Extensive Work; Learning from Guizhou's World Heritage Experience to Escape the Dilemma; New Thinking for Strengthening World Heritage Application Efforts.”

#### 4. Writing Requirements for Internal Reference Type Think Tank Reports

Writing an excellent internal reference type think tank report, like writing an outstanding academic paper, is fraught with challenges. As one source notes, “to write persuasive reports and proposals, knowing these is enough.” Report texts achieve persuasiveness only through detailed evidence, solid structure, rigorous logic, substantial expression, and practical countermeasures. The core strategy for writing internal reference type think tank reports lies in adhering to the “Five Precisions” standard.

##### 4.1 Selecting Precise Topics

Topic selection is a critical success factor for internal reference type think tank reports. In practice, avoid four tendencies: overly broad topics, outdated topics, trivial topics, and excessive topics. Focus efforts in four directions: (1) **Macro-strategic issues closely aligned with current situations and involving overall interests.** This demonstrates think tank institutional value and unique strategic design functions, emphasizing global, national, and regional development perspectives as well as national security, economic prosperity, and social stability. Examples include “Changing International Anti-Terrorism Patterns and Their Impact on China,” “Industrial Linkage and Upgrading Between the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and Africa,” and “Recommendations for Accelerating the Creation of a Second Golden Waterway from Dongting Lake to the Yangtze River.” (2) **Social responses to important higher-level decisions, new explorations in implementation, emerging dynamics, and solutions.** These topics receive high decision-maker attention but are difficult for secretarial and policy research departments to fully cover. As independent third parties, think tanks should fulfill their mission of closely tracking and serving Party committees and governments. Examples include “Top Ten Satisfaction and Expectations of Grassroots People in the New Era,” “Impact and Response Strategies of Comprehensive ‘Business Tax to VAT Reform’ on Hunan’s Finance,” and “Gains and Losses of Hunan’s Homestead System Reform—Assessment from Liuyang National Homestead System Reform Pilot County.” (3) **Urgent, important, and difficult matters of concern to leaders and society.** Major emergencies, important online public opinion, urgent and dangerous tasks, and social conundrums are decision-making challenges where think tanks should play key roles at critical moments. Examples include “Analysis and Reflection on ZTE’s US Sanctions Incident,” “Corruption Risks and Prevention for Domestic Enterprises Participating in Belt and

Road Construction,” “Suggestions for Addressing the Issue of Poverty Alleviation Funds ‘Lying Dormant’ in Accounts,” and “Breaking SME Financing Difficulties Through Accounts Receivable Financing.” (4) **Prediction, foresight, and early warning topics.** This is the most difficult and risky yet most needed research area where think tanks should build core competitiveness. Examples include “Trump’s Election Presents Huge Challenges for China,” “Threats of New Dual-Use Biotechnology to China’s Biosafety and Countermeasures,” and “Caution Needed in Subsidizing New Energy Vehicle Industries Before Technological Breakthroughs.”

## 4.2 Employing Sophisticated Expression

Decision-makers are the primary readers of internal reference type think tank reports. Given their busy schedules and large information intake, reports without high-quality expression struggle to attract attention. Writing should emphasize being logical, useful, and engaging—rational and plain yet profound and enlightening.

**(1) Grasping Textual Style.** Due to their quasi-official document nature, internal reference type think tank reports closely resemble Party and government official document materials in style. Two main styles exist: official document material style, and a hybrid style incorporating vivid examples, detailed description techniques, rich expression methods, and flexible structures from news communication genres to enhance readability.

**(2) Polishing Titles.** Titles are crucial elements. High-quality think tank report titles should meet requirements of imagery, philosophical depth, mass appeal, novelty, and reversibility—being intuitive, outline-critical, eye-catching, and well-balanced. For example: “Using Think Tank Soft Power to Enhance Development Hard Power” with subtitles “I. Reviewing Progress: Hunan’s New-Type Think Tank Construction Is Firm and Forceful” (with five sub-points) and “II. Examining Gains and Losses: Hunan’s New-Type Think Tank Construction Has Strengths Amid Weaknesses” (with four sub-points) and “III. Planning Upgrades: Hunan’s New-Type Think Tank Construction Has Solutions” (with five sub-points).

**(3) Writing Engaging Introductions.** Introductions under first- and second-level headings are challenging to write. They should be concise, highly condensed, and eye-catching, avoiding content-summary formats and expressing key points within one paragraph. They should clearly and concisely explain background, significance, identify problems, and present approaches, enabling readers to immediately grasp the text’s essence and interest.

**(4) Solidifying Main Content.** Content should be theme-focused, concise, well-evidenced, analytically sound, and engaging. Achievements should inspire, problems should resonate, and countermeasures should persuade. Emphasize telling truth, professional language, new perspectives, and weighty points—using grounded language, popular expressions, quoted material, data-driven

arguments, and perspectives leaders haven't heard. Balance academic and popular elements by appropriately incorporating theoretical models, professional terminology, and scientific statistics to demonstrate professional depth. Avoid logical conflicts such as non-independent sections, repeated themes across multiple sections, discussing countermeasures in problem sections or vice versa, or describing the same content positively in achievement sections and negatively in problem sections. Each section should stay on topic, avoiding irrelevant content.

### 4.3 Proposing Refined Countermeasures

The countermeasure section is the core of internal reference type think tank reports and what decision-makers value most. Common problems include: (1) Unoriginal viewpoints—stating common knowledge, widely known perspectives, or existing document content; (2) Impractical countermeasures—empty measures, grandiose rhetoric, or correct but useless statements; (3) Inaccurate measures—proposals that are unrealistic, fanciful, or unimplementable; (4) Insufficient ideas—overgeneralization or oversimplification that fails to solve problems. Good countermeasures should be well-structured, coherent, rational, comprehensive, and highly actionable, integrating solutions to specific and deep-seated problems, balancing local and global interests, and coordinating immediate needs with long-term planning. They should address relationships between key and general issues, mainstream and tributary aspects, priorities, and timing. Emphasize scientific feasibility by proposing solutions that can be implemented within time and space constraints, supported by realistic foundations, and meeting scientific efficiency requirements.

### 4.4 Maintaining Concise Length

Internal reference type think tank reports feature applicability, timeliness, and directness, requiring concise and succinct length—avoiding verbosity. Western internal reference reports generally follow the “three-minute principle” of being readable while standing. Chinese internal reference reports typically control length around 2,500 characters, with a folk description of “Size 3 font, six pages, understandable by ninth-grade compulsory education level” (the “three-six-nine” rule). In reality, different departments and scenarios have varying requirements: General Offices of the CPC Central Committee and State Council generally limit internal references to around 1,000 characters; the Central Propaganda Department typically allows about 3,000 characters; the State Bureau for Letters and Calls’ “Expert Suggestions” are generally 300-500 characters; and information-type internal references for leaders are even shorter. Some customized, specially required, or individually positioned reports may have greater length flexibility (ranging from 5,000 to tens of thousands of characters) to meet deep reading needs, but short texts remain predominant.

#### 4.5 Presenting Polished Appearance

Writing internal reference type think tank reports is essentially an art of imperfection—while perfection is impossible, excellence should be pursued. With decision-makers as the readership, appearance should be rigorous, standardized, aesthetically pleasing, and reader-friendly, paying special attention to document aesthetics. Although not a statutory official document type, internal reference type think tank reports function similarly to “reports” among statutory official document categories and circulate through Party and government document processing procedures, giving them certain official document attributes. Therefore, formatting should follow the “Regulations on the Handling of Party and Government Official Documents” and “Formats of Party and Government Official Documents” regarding fonts, sizes, spacing, page numbers, layout, and binding. Particular attention must be paid to eliminating errors in leaders’ names, positions, and institutional names.

Research on writing strategies for internal reference type think tank reports represents an effort to distill theoretical discourse systems in Chinese writing studies, philology, and official document studies, and constitutes an important component in constructing Chinese think tank science. Future research should focus on think tank advisory text writing as the main subject, actively absorbing theories and methods from traditional philology, modern writing studies, text linguistics, and Western writing studies at both “theoretical and practical effectiveness levels,” striving for breakthroughs in applying modern policy analysis methods such as big data, cloud computing, quantitative statistics, and prediction and early warning, and deeply exploring other advisory text writing fields including special planning, policy evaluation, proposals, and annual reports to construct a complete theoretical system for Chinese think tank report writing.

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## The Report Writing of Internal Reference Type Think Tanks

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**Abstract:** [Purpose/Significance] Many philosophy and social science workers can write academic papers but cannot write internal reference type think tank reports, which cannot keep up with the needs of think tank construction. To enrich the theory of Chinese writing, public literature, philology, and think tank science, and to improve the level of think tank construction, it is necessary to study the report writing of internal reference type think tanks. [Method/Process] This paper defined the basic types of political advisory texts in think tanks, refined the structure of the text, and constructed the writing techniques of the text. [Result/Conclusion] In the internal reference type think tank report writing,

there are six kinds of structure including three-paragraph, parallel, quasi-three-paragraph, two-paragraph, four-paragraph, and five-paragraph, and 27 kinds of content structure including “problem-cause-countermeasure” and so on. It also requires a selection of topics, elaborate expression, refined countermeasures, refined length, and exquisite presentation.

**Keywords:** internal reference type think tank report; type & structure; writing techniques

*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

*Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.*