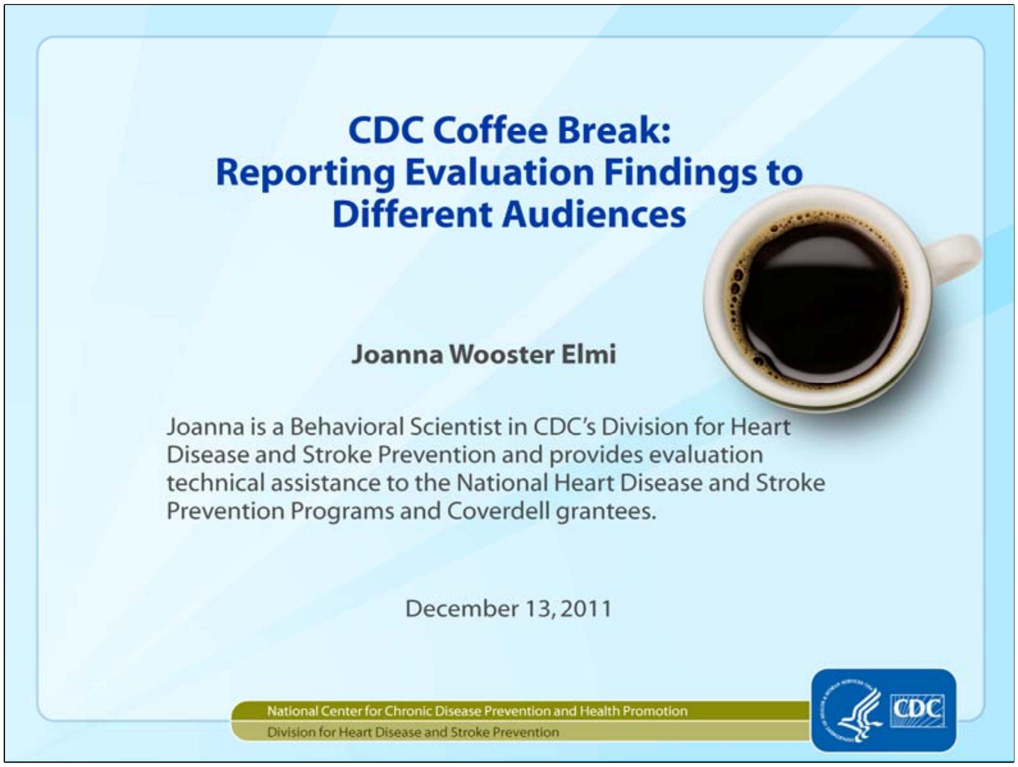
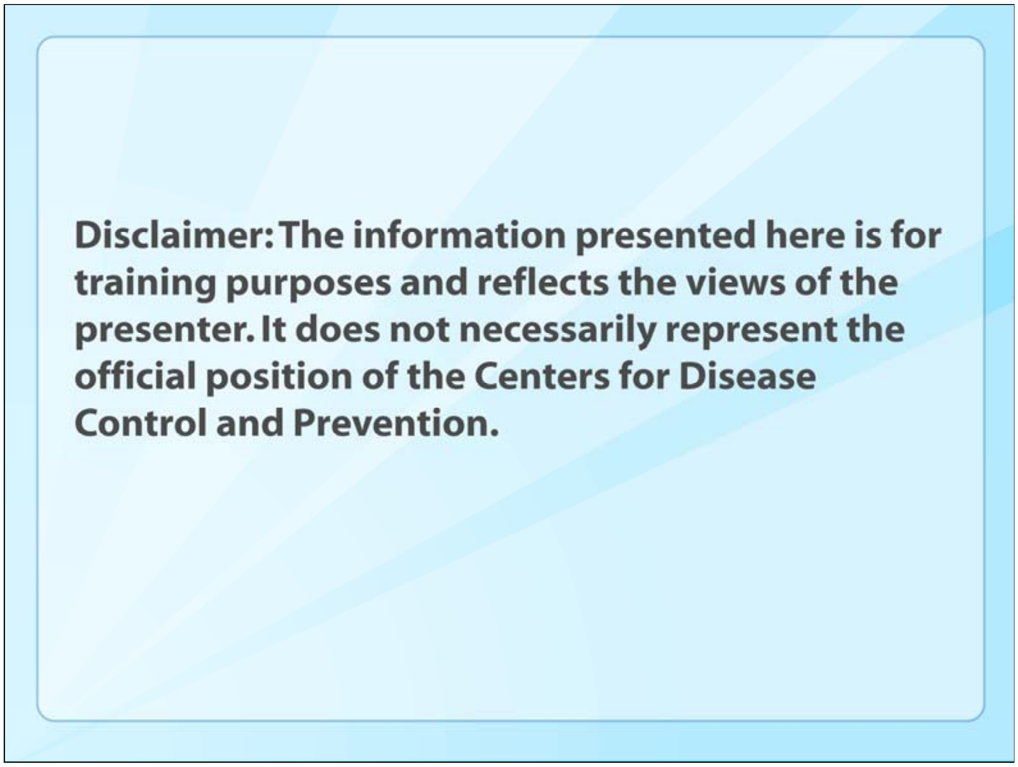


Welcome to today's Coffee Break presented by the Evaluation and Program Effectiveness Team in the Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

*Note: Screen magnification settings may affect document appearance.



The information presented here is for training purposes and reflects the views of the presenter. It doesn't necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

This topic is one that comes up regularly both here within our evaluation team as well as among our collaborators, and probably because we recognize that the means and manner in which we disseminate our findings to each audience is so closely intertwined with the *use* of those findings. An analogy that I like describes the evaluation report as the "open house" for a newly built or renovated home. It's an opportunity to communicate your evaluation findings—a way to share accomplishments of the program, lessons learned, and potential areas of improvement. An evaluator's ultimate goal is not to have a final report, but to share information that someone or some entity can use to make a decision or take action.

In order to achieve this we ask ourselves, "What is the best means to communicate what we want to communicate to a specific target audience or our intended primary users?"

Today we'll touch upon some key considerations for developing the report to help ensure use of the results, as well as discuss standard components of an evaluation report, and explore various products or formats that may be appropriate for various audiences.

Hopefully this brief presentation will reinforce and encourage you to keep thinking beyond the "traditional" evaluation report to meet the needs of your stakeholders.

Make It Actionable!

- Evaluation reporting to ensure use
- Key considerations
  - Identify evaluation purpose.
  - Continually engage stakeholders.
  - Define audience.

From the Beginning…

Develop a communication strategy.

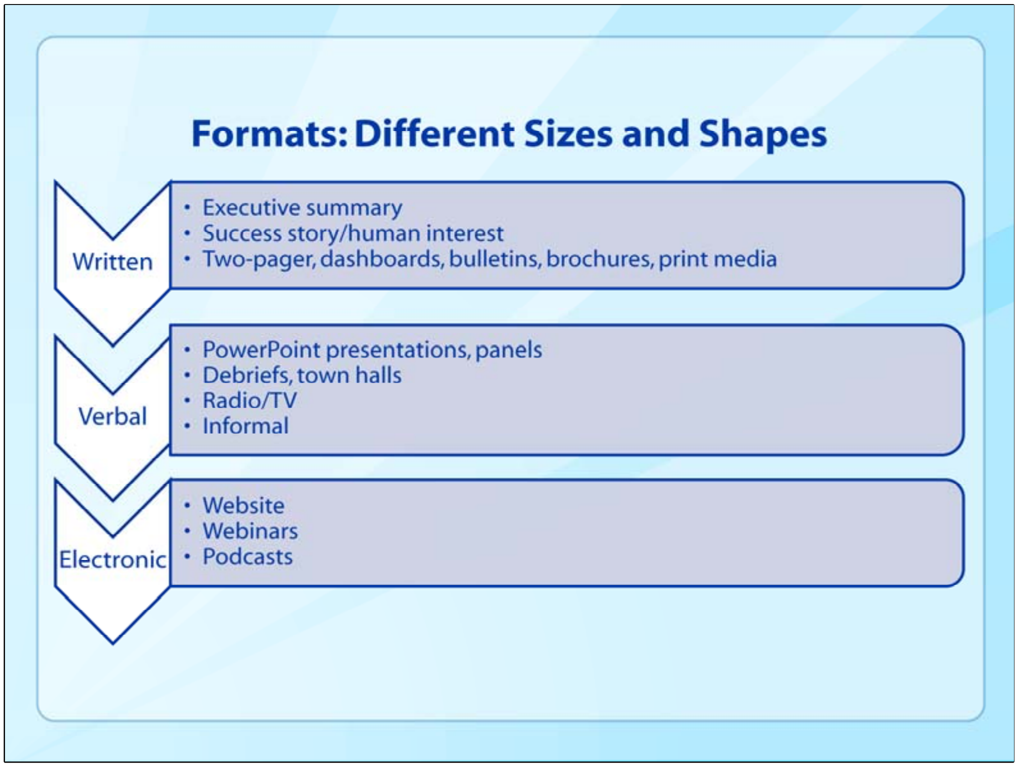
Stakeholder	Information Needed	Best Format	Timeline	Who Will Prepare/ Deliver?	Costs

How do we put some of these ideas and decisions down on paper? From the very beginning when designing the evaluation, develop a communication strategy. This will enable you to be intentional about the evaluation purpose, intended use and users, and to identify the best mechanism to communicate the desired information. Again, engage stakeholders in this process.

Identify who needs or wants to see or hear the evaluation results. What do they need to learn from the evaluation? What is the best way for the audience to receive this information? Consider the best time frame to share information, who will prepare the product, and the cost involved. Revisit this plan and update as needed.

Let's revisit the idea of the traditional "full length" report. There are some situations that warrant having this type of extensive report. For example, when contracting out an evaluation, the funder may want a detailed description for each of these sections, for example, what methods were used, what were the data sources, etc. The traditional report can be used to feed into other tailored products for specific stakeholders that will vary in detail and emphasis. The main components of any strong report are:

- **The summary.** The summary is 1–2 pages, very succinct, and lists the highlights of the evaluation. It provides a brief summary of the program, and will highlight key findings and recommendations. It's reflective of the full report but includes only what's most relevant or noteworthy. Tips: start with conclusions and recommendations, and underline key ideas, statements, or recommendations.
- **Background.** This includes an overview and introduction, provides the context of the evaluation, and offers any baseline knowledge audience needs to know. It may cover the purpose and use of evaluation, stakeholders, and key evaluation questions.
- **Methods.** Describe how the evaluation was carried out.
- **Presentation and interpretation of findings.** This should be balanced, sharing both negative and positive findings. Display data graphically or in tables as well as describing it with narrative.
- **Recommendations, lessons learned, and action steps.** The "so what." Explain what results in mean in terms of the evaluation questions or in the broad picture. This is a good place to engage stakeholders.



Aside from traditional reports, formats that may be appropriate for your use are what Hendricks, author of “Making a Splash: Reporting Evaluation Results Effectively,” called *action-oriented*.

Action-oriented reports:
- Are focused and grounded in simplicity.
- Are geared toward a particular audience and a specific “action.”
- May employ a anecdotal or even an involved, influential tone (rather than detached or neutral).
- Offer flexibility in terms of styles of reporting and time needed to prepare evaluation products

Within the 3 categories shown we have many formats, and even more could be added.

Written: Here I’ve highlighted the concise, short, and to-the-point documents.
- Human interest: Short narratives or stories that bring a personal touch to your evaluation results. Describe the experiences of someone affected by the project in some way to either show a success or challenge.
- Short communications: These can highlight evaluation information, increase interest in full evaluation findings, and can serve public relation purposes. Use graphics, color, and formatting to attract readers.

Verbal: These can range from informal to more formal formats.
- More interactive and could possibly lead to more commitment and engagement.
- Using radio and TV can reach a broader audience beyond your primary stakeholders and also increase policy advocacy.

Electronic:
- Websites reach a broad audience.
- Webinars and podcasts can facilitate interaction and collaboration across geographic space.

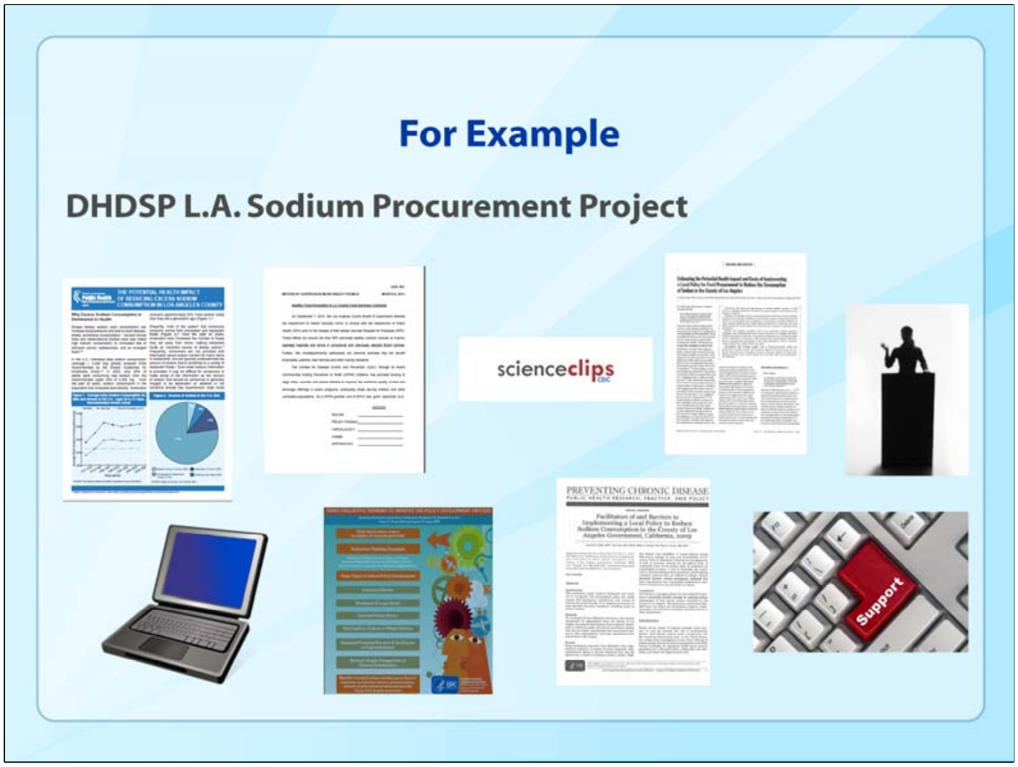
This slide displays some examples of how different formats may be more appropriate for specific audiences.

The program manager leads the project, oversees the day to day, and makes decisions about future of program. This person has a high investment, but little time to read the full length report. He or she needs information presented in a way that promotes efficient action and decision making.

Program staff are those carrying out the activities on a day to day basis. They need more casual updates through agency newsletter or frequent at-a-glance updates. It’s their responsibility to be well informed of program operations and outcomes. This can be provided by a dashboard report on key indicators and process measures.

Policy makers may be moved by a human interest story that will resonate with their constituents, or a brief that presents strong evidence and clear, strategic recommendations within their sphere of influence and interest.

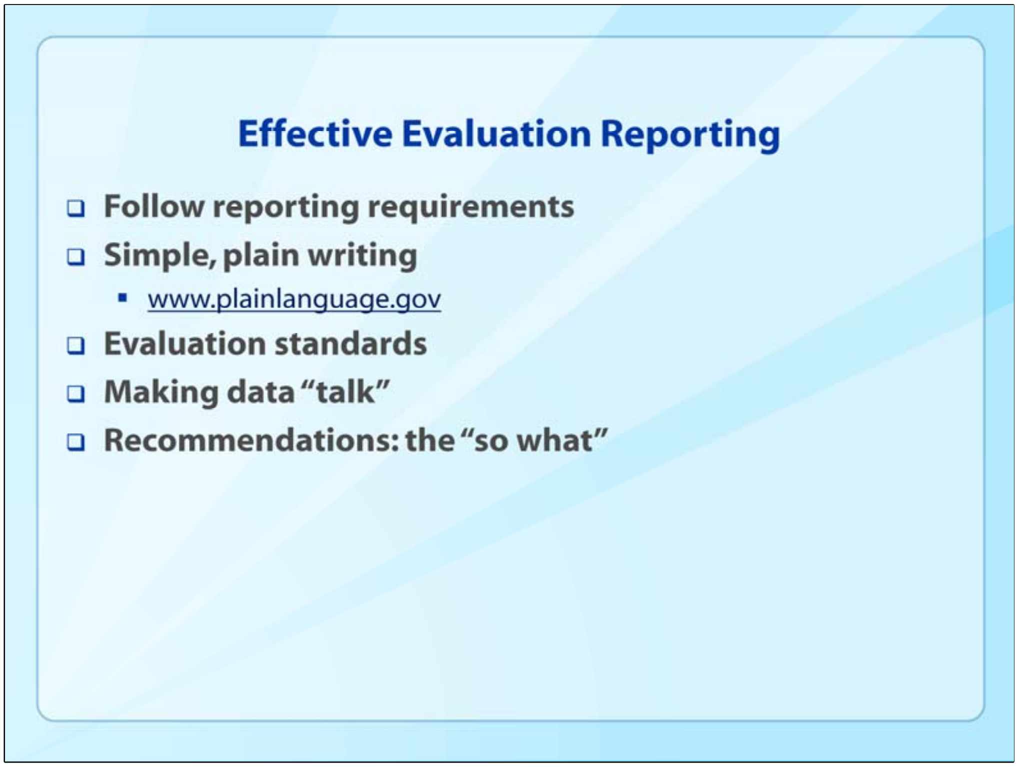
Likewise, community members are impacted through human interest stories, bringing the point close to home. Town hall meetings are a great way to engage community in dialogue about an action plan or to ask questions.



I also want to share an example from the DHDSP Evaluation Team and Los Angeles County. The L.A. sodium procurement project was a policy analysis to help inform future policy development around sodium procurement, rather than a formal evaluation of a program. However, it serves as a good example of how the findings were shared in numerous ways with multiple audiences.

Following the onset of the project:

- A policy issue brief was developed for L.A. County which contributed to the passage of a County of L.A. Board Motion in March 2011 related to healthy food procurement.
- Two peer review articles were published on the topic.
- Presentations were delivered to state sodium task forces, HDSP grantees at annual meeting, NACCHO, and NACDD. NACDD is using the issue brief as a template in a tool box for other state and local HDs to look at potential health impact of a sodium procurement policy in their jurisdictions.
- Webinars were held for ASTHO and NACCHO.
- Conference presentations and posters were designed to share lessons learned.
- Findings were highlighted internally at CDC through a weekly digest called “science clips.”
- Information was used to provide technical assistance for other programs.



A couple of final points for a strong product regardless of the format or audience:

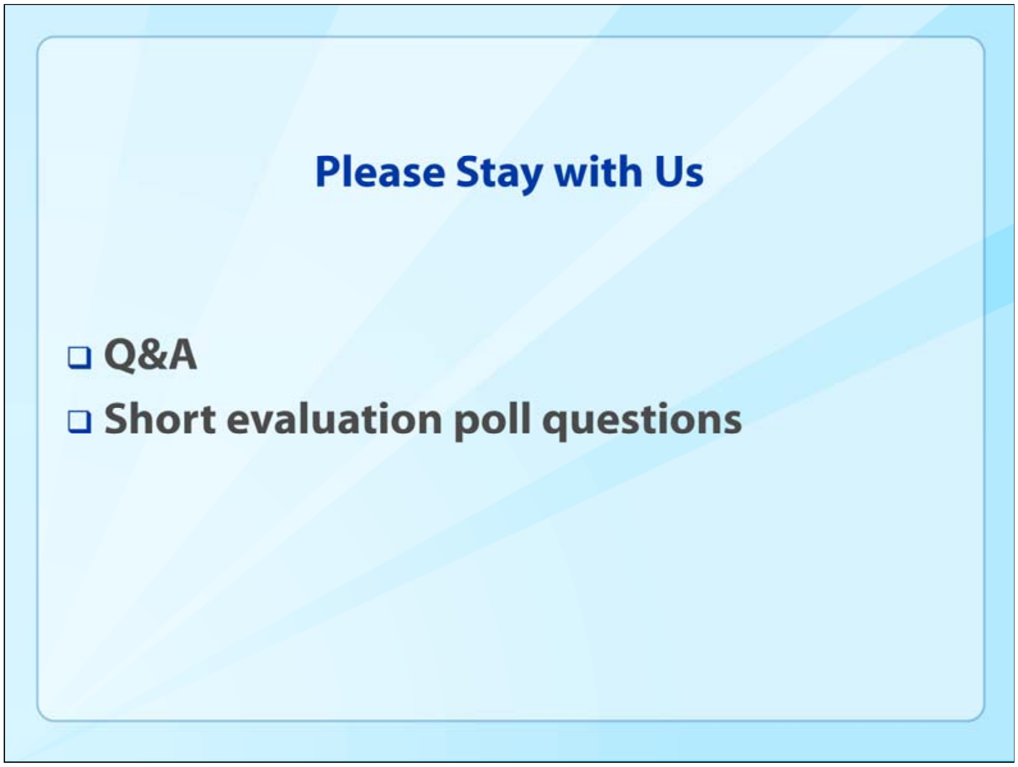
- First, always follow reporting requirements set by funders, etc.
- Keep the writing simple and plain. In October 2010, President Obama signed the Plain Writing Act. The law requires that federal agencies use "clear Government communication that the public can understand and use." Refer to this website to learn more.
- Ensure that the product achieves the evaluation standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy.
- Findings—make the data "talk." Refer to resources including:
    - The July 2011 Coffee Break presentations "Communicating Data"
    - "Communicating Data for Action," a September 2011 grantee meeting presentation
    - A new resource from the National Cancer Institute: "Making Data Talk—A Workbook"
- Recommendations—The most important part. Presenting findings in relation to your evaluation questions and the broader picture. The take home message, the "so what." Make sure they are relevant, useful, in line with stakeholder values, and operationalized for action.

Resources

- **Hendricks, M. Making a Splash: Reporting Evaluation Results Effectively. Jossey-Bass; San Francisco, CA (chapter from Handbook of Practical Program Evaluation). 1994**
- **Patton, MQ. Utilization-focused Evaluation. Impact and Value: Telling Your Program's Story from the Division of Oral Health. Sage Publications; Thousand Oaks, CA. 2008**
  - www.cdc.gov/OralHealth/publications/library/success_stories_wkbk.htm

Resources (cont.)

- Baxter, Lester W., and Marc T. Braverman, "Communicating Results to Different Audiences." In Foundations and Evaluation: Contexts and Practices for Effective Philanthropy; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 2004
- National Cancer Institute. Making Data Talk: A Workbook. 2011
- HHS Plain Language website.
  - www.plainlanguage.gov



Do you know of a good resource that describes when best to use a specific product or format?
In the resource listed “Communicating Results to Different Audiences” there is a useful table showing the different communication tools or formats, their strengths and limitations, and the most suitable audiences.

What about after the evaluation product is developed? Do you have any recommendations for effective dissemination?

- Create a dissemination plan to determine the best mediums, delivery channels, and venues to share your findings.
- Think about reporting findings frequently—quarterly, bi-annually—so it’s not just a one time event at the end of the evaluation or project.
- Stay involved and you’ll be in a better position to ensure use.
- Document the reach of your dissemination efforts; follow up to determine if recommendations were implemented and what was the outcome.

Thank You

If you have questions, please contact:
ddunet@cdc.gov

For more information please contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30333
Telephone, 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)/TTY: 1-888-232-6348
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov   Web: www.cdc.gov

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division for Heart Disease and Prevention