Once evaluation activities and analysis are complete, we usually turn our thoughts to writing a report to summarize our findings. In fact, formulating the report should be started during the data collection phase. Here are some guidelines for completing a formal evaluation report.

1. Determine the needs, purposes and probable audiences for the report. Evaluation reports are often shared with several different audiences including clients, staff, funders and any other groups who have a stake in our work.

2. Develop a report outline that includes the following:

   a. The reporting formats that will be used which could include written reports (full length and executive summary) and presentation materials.
   b. The timeline for producing the report
   c. The dissemination plan for the report
   d. The team or individuals responsible for writing and reviewing the report

3. Share the report outline, including writing assignments, audience list, suggested reporting formats, proposed timeline, and dissemination plan with key stakeholders.

4. Make revisions to the report outline and all other report plans to incorporate key stakeholder suggestions.

During report creation, it's important to be patient and allow for a process that may involve several reviews and revisions. Once the report author(s) have completed their writing assignments, the report can be compiled and shared with a team of reviewers or stakeholders. Suggested revisions go back to the report authors and the process begins again until the report is acceptable to the evaluation team.

Report writing checklist

✔	**Follow the report writing steps** described above. It's okay to be somewhat flexible with the order but ensure each part of the process is completed.
✔	**Make an internal outline** including who is responsible for which sections. Allow for sufficient time for stakeholders to help with editing and making revisions.
✔	**Be economical in deciding what to include in the report**. Shorter is better. Avoid excessive use of jargon
✔	**Read and re-read** – to ensure the report is clearly written and the flow of ideas is logical. Use complete sentences and standard English grammar conventions.

✓	**Apply formatting.** Consistently applied headers and sections will help the reader navigate the report. Number the pages and apply double-spacing if necessary.
✓	**Use tables and graphs** to help illustrate findings. All tables and graphs must have titles, labels and legends or footnotes so that they stand alone.
✓	**Use quotes and vignettes** or snippets from field notes to illustrate findings. Use quote marks and attribute the quote to the speaker (or type of speaker – e.g., a participant). If presenting field notes, be sure they're clearly identified and in context.
✓	**Be consistent** in the use of language, capitalization, punctuation etc. Evaluation reports are usually written in the past tense. Recommended next steps written in the future tense.
✓	**Don't introduce new topics in the final sections of the report**. This includes explanations of any design changes or what should be happening with a program regardless of the findings presented in the report.

Report Writing Tips

- Tailor the report to the intended audience; different versions may be needed for different audience segments.
- Present clear and succinct results.
- Summarize the stakeholder roles and involvement.
- Explain the focus of the evaluation and its limitations.
- Summarize the evaluation plan and procedures.
- List the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation.
- List the advantages and disadvantages of the recommendations.
- Verify that the report is unbiased and accurate.
- Remove technical jargon.
- Use examples, illustrations, graphics, and stories.
- Prepare and distribute reports on time.
- Distribute reports to as many stakeholders as possible.

Adapted From:

Checklist for Program Evaluation Report Content by Kelly N. Robertson and Lori A. Wingate—New Checklist
Evaluation Feedback Workshops by Arlen Gullickson and Daniel Stufflebeam
Evaluation Reports by Gary Miron
Making Evaluation Meaningful to All Education Stakeholders by Paula Gangopadhyay

hello@peelevaluates.ca   www.peelevaluates.ca