Organizing a KT Report: Style Tips

HELP YOUR READER TO READ EFFICIENTLY

• Length matters because time matters. Provide options for your reader. (Canadian Health Services Research Foundation standard is 1:3:25 pages; Cochrane Collaboration standard is 1:5:15:45 minutes).

• Set the stage: In 2-3 sentences, state the document’s purpose, intended audience, and what readers have to gain from reading on.

  E.g. “This report explains some of the barriers that prevent South Asian women in Toronto from getting mammograms. It can be used by service organizations to help plan programming for their clients. This report is based on a survey of South Asian women, conducted by CRICH in 2011.”

• Start with the information that your readers are most interested in. Use the news-style “inverted pyramid”.
  − Lead with the conclusion
  − End with the information that’s least relevant to the reader
  − Use Appendices or “back of the book” for references and resources (“For more information”)

• Use headings as headlines to describe the meaning of the content, not the type of content (“What did we learn?” or “Screening worked for most patient groups” rather than “Results”).

• Provide your contact information.

PRACTICE “CHUNKING”

• Use short sentences (1 idea per sentence), short paragraphs (2-3 sentences per paragraph), and frequent headings.

• Write messages in bullets.

• Use page elements (like text boxes) to split your page into information “zones”. “Zones” help your reader quickly find the information they need.
  − Use text boxes to pull out and emphasize the most important information
  − Use side bars with smaller text for definitions
  − Use the top or bottom of the page for contact information and logos
  − Use captions under visuals (graphics, charts) to clearly explain in words what the visual shows

• Use a generous amount of white space. Wide margins and empty space between “zones” provide visual relief.

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CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON INNER CITY HEALTH, TORONTO
WWW.CRICH.CA
How Long Should My KT Report Be?  
Style Tips

The Canadian Health Services Research Foundation and others recommend a graded entry approach for writing research reports. This means providing your audience with short, medium, and long report options, depending on how much they want to know, and how much time they have to read.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-PAGER</th>
<th>~3-PAGE SUMMARY</th>
<th>~25-PAGE REPORT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 minutes to read</strong></td>
<td><strong>10 minutes to read</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 minutes to read</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>Content:</td>
<td>Content:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Headline as title (not grant title)</td>
<td>• Cover page: 1-pager</td>
<td>• Cover page: 1-pager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 2-3 sentences re: the 1-pager’s purpose, intended audience, and what readers have to gain from reading on</td>
<td>• Brief discussion to support main messages:</td>
<td>• Discussion + details/data re:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bulleted messages, including implications for policy and practice (not summary of findings)</td>
<td>- Background/context/need</td>
<td>- Background/context/need</td>
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<tr>
<td>• List of researchers and partners</td>
<td>- Implications for policy and practice</td>
<td>- Implications for policy and practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Contact information</td>
<td>- Compelling examples from findings</td>
<td>- Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Citation for 25-page report or journal publication</td>
<td>• Important charts and graphics</td>
<td>- Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Very brief description of methods</td>
<td>- Limitations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- What still needs to be done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• List of references and other resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Appendices, for highly technical material and results that aren’t relevant to messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCES:**

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