

EVALUATION

Evaluation is how value is assigned to something. Evaluation is a part of our everyday lives. In fact, it is easy to assume that people are in a constant state of evaluation. We evaluate the weather, the traffic, the movies, our neighbor's new landscaping, and on and on. Another interesting characteristic about evaluation is that the end result of any evaluation depends, in large part, on the evaluator's perspective. For example, I love the snow. In my opinion, few things compare to the feeling and appearance of a beautiful winter's landscape as large snowflakes fall and form a shiny white layer on the ground. It makes sense, then, for me to evaluate those snowy, winter days as being beautiful. My friend, however, only likes warm, tropical weather. For her, weather that is hot, humid, and sunny is beautiful. When she sees weather that is cold and snowy, she would say the weather is awful. So, how can one person say something is beautiful and another person say it is awful? The answer is simple: there is a difference in perspective or framework. The method I use to classify a day as being beautiful is different than that of my friend. I look for snow, snow flakes, and cold weather. My friend looks for sun, heat, and humidity. Clearly, there are numerous ways to evaluate something.

What's Covered

- An Introduction to Evaluation
- Parts of Evaluation
- How to Build an Evaluation Plan
- Telling the Story of your Success

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PARTS OF EVALUATION

The pure and simple truth is rarely pure and never simple.

Oscar Wilde

One of the great mistakes is to judge policies and programs by their intentions rather than their results.

Milton Friedman

GOALS

A goal is a general statement about what you would like to achieve through your event, program, organization, or activity. Goals are typically described through a brief statement like “To make our alleys clean places to drive, walk, and enjoy.” The intention of a goal is to provide direction for action, as well as direction for the objectives that you will measure for your evaluation. A goal statement can be general and should capture the spirit of your efforts that will be evaluated (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 1999). It is not necessary to measure your goal directly. As you will learn below, the goal will be broken down into different objectives. Those objectives will be broken down into measurable parts which, in sum, will provide the results of your evaluation.

OBJECTIVES

Objectives are the steppingstones that lead to the goals that you are pursuing through your event, program, organization, or activity. These are the measurable activities that you have deemed necessary to complete in order to achieve the goals you have set. Take for instance the goal stated above relating to clean alleys. One possible objective would be “to recruit 15 neighbors to volunteer for a morning of alley clean-up.” Another possible objective could be “to collect at least 100 pounds of trash during the alley clean-up.”

In general, objectives should either describe the results you are attempting to achieve, or describe the way in which you seek to achieve your results. So, there are two broad types of objectives: Outcome Objectives and Process Objectives (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 1999). Both of these types of objectives form the building blocks that lead to the goals of your event, program, organization, or activity.

OUTCOME OBJECTIVES (FINAL/ INTERMEDIATE)

Outcome Objectives are those objectives that deal with the results of your work. They are the measurable end products that need to be achieved in order to meet your goals. There are two types of Outcome Objectives: Intermediate Outcome Objectives and Final Outcome Objectives (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 1999). These two types of Outcome Objectives are both measurable results, but they occur at different times during the event, program, or activity.

Intermediate Outcome Objectives describe the results you hope for before the end of the event, program, or activity. Again, pulling from the two examples of outcomes for the alley clean-up, the objective “to recruit 15 neighbors to volunteer for a morning of alley clean-up”, is



an Intermediate Outcome Objective. This is an Intermediate Outcome Objective because it is a result or end (i.e. having 15 volunteers), and it is necessary to meet this objective before the alley clean up begins.

Final Outcome Objectives describe the results you hope for near the end of the event, program, or activity. The example detailed above, “to collect at least 100 pounds of trash during the alley clean up”, is an example of an Outcome Objectives. This is a Final Outcome Objective because it is a result that will occur at the end of the alley clean up. The objective that we mentioned above “to collect at least 100 pounds of trash during the alley clean up” is an example of a Final Outcome Objective. But, the Intermediate Outcome Objectives must be met before the final outcome objective to be met. They build from one another. In order to collect 100 pounds of trash, the neighborhood group will need at least 15 neighborhood volunteers.

Intermediate Outcome Objectives are the building blocks that lead to the Final Outcome Objective. Each Intermediate Outcome Objective must be met in order to meet the Final Outcome Objective. Each building block must be placed before the house is finally built.

PROCESS OBJECTIVES

While Intermediate and Final Outcome Objectives deal with measuring the ends or results of an action, the Process Objectives deal with measuring the way in which you try to achieve the Outcome Objectives (Kettner, Moroney, & Martin, 1999). These objectives answer the question, “How will we do this?”

Consider the example of the Intermediate Outcome Objective “to recruit 15 neighbors to volunteer for a morning of alley clean-up.” In order to achieve this objective, you will need to do at least a couple of things; you will need a process. You might need to send an e-mail to the neighbors that have an e-mail address. Also, you might need to call those neighbors that you have phone numbers for, but no e-mail address. Lastly, you might need to go door-to-door to some new neighbors you have not met. All three of these things will be separate Process Objectives for that Intermediate Outcome Objective of recruiting 15 neighborhood volunteers. Those Process Objectives would be as follows:

- (1) To e-mail all 24 neighbors with an e-mail address and ask if they will volunteer for the alley clean-up.
- (2) To call all 10 neighbors with a telephone number, but no e-mail address, and ask if they will volunteer for the alley clean-up.
- (3) To go visit the 10 new neighbors whom I’ve never met and ask if they will volunteer for the alley clean-up.

As you can see, these Process Objectives pertain to steps that lead to the Outcome Objective of recruiting 15 volunteers. It is important to identify process objectives. As you begin to complete the evaluation process, measurement of process objectives can help one understand the reasons why a particular Outcome Objective succeeded, or where there is opportunity to improve.



A Final Note on Objectives

Once you have identified all objectives for your goals, it is important to strengthen those objectives by adding three additional elements to the outcome statement. Those three elements are timeframes, measurement tools, and responsibility assignments. The timeframe is the date or range of time for which you will complete each objective. The measurement tool is the way in which you will measure the objective. The responsibility assignment is simply stating the person or group of people who are responsible for completing the measurement of the objective.

Take for instance the process objective “To e-mail all 24 neighbors with an e-mail address and ask if they will volunteer for the alley clean-up.” To fully complete that Process Objective, it is important to add the timeframe, measurement tools, and responsibility assignment. For example, “To e-mail all 24 neighbors with an e-mail address and ask if they will volunteer for the alley clean-up by June 10, 2008 as measured by the Alley Clean-Up Check list and to be completed by John Doe.”

It is understandable that, at first glance, this work of identifying goals and objectives is quite confusing. Remember that they each build from one another in support of the goals pursued by your group or organization.

TRY IT!

To make better sense of the relationships between goals and objectives, please take a look at the chart below. We have completed the left portion of the chart. In the space provided, develop other objectives to assist in this goal.

The chart is a hierarchical diagram with a goal at the top, followed by three columns of objectives. The first column is filled with handwritten examples, while the other two are blank for user input. The levels are: Goal, Final Outcome Objective, Intermediate Outcome Objective, and Process Outcome.

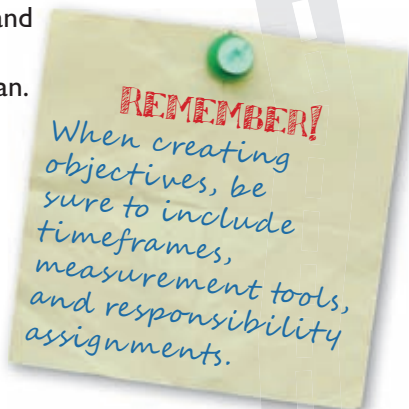
Goal	Final Outcome Objective	Intermediate Outcome Objective	Process Outcome
To make our alleys clean places to walk, drive, and enjoy.	To collect at least 100 pounds of trash during the clean-up.	To recruit 15 volunteers for the clean-up.	E-mail Neighbors Call Neighbors Visit new Neighbors

DEVELOPING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: BUILDING AN EVALUATION PLAN



Since we are working with and in our neighborhood, it is important to get other neighbors involved in evaluating the events, activities, and programs of your neighborhood group. One great way to do this is to assemble an evaluation group or evaluation committee for your neighborhood-based organization. Recruit and assemble a small working group of between 5 to 8 neighbors and neighborhood stakeholders. Try to make this group as diverse as possible with people from all different backgrounds, cultures, and perspectives. Your evaluation plan will be strengthened by a diversity of perspectives while creating the goals and objectives of your evaluation plan.

Once you have the group assembled, set an initial meeting with everyone at a time and place that is convenient for the group. At that meeting, provide an introduction to goals and objectives including their definitions and examples. From there, work with the group to identify goals. If time remains, identify the Outcome and Process Objectives for the activity, event, or program you are attempting to evaluate. You might find it necessary to schedule another meeting to finish the creation of the objectives. The main goal is to allow the group, through conversation, to create the goals and objectives for your evaluation. Once you have created the goals and objectives, display them in a chart that clearly shows the progression from Process Objectives to Goals. Then, schedule future meeting times to review the progress of the evaluation plan and discuss results as they are made available.



Picture This – A Unique Way to Creating Goals and Outcomes in a Community

Zion Hill Baptist Church in the Martindale Brightwood Neighborhoods on Indianapolis' North East side wanted to include their youth's perspective to help fuel positive change in that community. After receiving support for various organizations, leaders in that church and its surrounding neighborhood purchased dozens of digital cameras and put them in the hands of a large group of children who live in that community. The children were given one charge: document your day-to-day lives from the bird's eye-view, the street level view, and the bug's eye-view.

The kids received training on basic photography skills and were sent out into their neighborhood to capture their lives through the lens of a camera. Thousands of pictures later, the youth organized their printed images into different themes like "opportunity" and "hope". They use those themed photographs in public spaces and neighborhood meetings to add perspective and help answer the question, "this is what our youth see, what should we do to build from their perspectives?"

When developing outcomes and goals for your neighborhood or neighborhood based organization, your evaluation committee should involve as many perspectives as possible. Using photographs taken by neighbors to fuel a discussion on goals and objectives presents a powerful forum to extract goals and objectives for any evaluation plan. While a picture might be worth a thousand words, perhaps it can also help create several outcomes.

REAL LIFE SCENARIO



TRY IT!

We have completed the left portion of the chart below. In the space provided, develop other objectives to assist in this goal.

GOAL 1.0

To make our alleys clean places to walk, drive, and enjoy.

GOAL 2.0

GOAL 3.0

FINAL OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE 1.1

To collect at least 100 pounds of trash during the clean-up, to be completed by the end of the day of the Alley Clean up on June 30, 2008, as measured by a trash weigh-in using a home-scale, assigned to Jane Doe.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE 1.2

To recruit 15 volunteers for the clean-up, to be completed by two weeks before the Alley Clean up or June 16, 2008, to be measured by a volunteer sign-in sheet, assigned to Jason Doe.

PROCESS

OBJECTIVE 1.3

To e-mail all 24 neighbors with an e-mail address and ask if they will volunteer for the alley clean-up, by June 2, 2008, to be measured by the neighbor contact log, assigned to Jamie Doe.

PROCESS

OBJECTIVE 1.4

To call all 10 neighbors with a telephone number, but no e-mail address and ask if they will volunteer for the alley clean-up, by June 2, 2008, to be measured by the neighbor contact log, assigned to Jamie Doe.

A Note on Measurement Tools:

The term “Measurement Tools” conjures up images of scientific proportions: stethoscopes, rulers, computers, etc. A measurement tool can be as simple as a sign-in sheet, a to-do check-list, or a simple questionnaire. It’s possible that notes from a conversation can be a measurement tool. In general, a measurement tool is anything you use to collect the data that is used to show how you have completed an objective. For instance, if you want to measure the 100 pounds of trash you pick up during your alley clean-up, then your measurement tool will probably be a scale. If you want to have a neighborhood meeting and one of your Final Outcome Objectives is to have 50 people attend the neighborhood meeting, then your measurement tool will most likely be a sign-in sheet. The best guide to selecting an effective measurement tool for your objectives is common sense. So, with the help of your evaluation group or committee, think through all of the possibilities for measuring your objectives and come up with the one or two measurement tools that will work best.

NOW YOU HAVE DATA, WHAT’S NEXT: TELLING YOUR STORY OF SUCCESS



There are two main reasons for evaluating all the great things you are doing in your neighborhood: to learn and to share with others. Learning together as a neighborhood organization is an important role of an evaluation. As your evaluation group meets to review the progress of the evaluation plan, be sure to review the data that has been measured along the way and discuss the meaning of that data. When appropriate, share that data with other neighbors who are helping in your neighborhood event, activity or program. For your neighbors, a final report is often too late. So, it is important to share your results throughout the process and make changes when needed. This will support the learning process and strengthen your neighborhood efforts.

The other main reason for evaluating your neighborhood events, activities, or programs is to share your successes with the outside world. Again, use your evaluation group to determine the external audience with whom you will share your results. Also, determine the best format for sharing those results. The format for sharing your results might change depending upon the types of audiences that will review them (i.e. funders, other neighborhood organizations, city officials, etc.). There is no correct way for sharing your results, as long as it is appropriate for your audience. Keep in mind, however, that it is perfectly fine to be creative and utilize various methods for sharing (i.e. photographs, charts and tables, narratives, etc.).

When sharing your results, either internally for learning purposes or externally as a final report, be sure to focus on the successes of your efforts even if they were not intended successes. Note any shortcomings you found through the evaluation, or challenges encountered during the planning and/or event. No event, activity, or program is perfect and it is perfectly natural to have room for improvement. It is good to make note of those shortcomings and discuss how you have incorporated the learning in your future actions as a neighborhood. In sum, be creative, focus on your successes, and learn from your shortcomings.

