Event Evaluation & Analysis Methods

Event evaluation and analysis is an important aspect of event planning that is often overlooked. There are many different methods, both qualitative and quantitative, that can be used to determine the success of an event. Event evaluation and analysis should take place in order to realize: what worked well and should stay the same; what worked but needs minor modifications; and what didn't work and should be changed. By neglecting this step in the event planning process, it is hard to measure the success of the event and to recognize any changes that would help to improve upcoming events.

Qualitative

Verbal

- **Follow-up Phone Call**
  - Works well for smaller events
  - More personal
  - People don't always like telephone solicitation, may hang-up on you
  - People may not want to give out phone number
  - Takes considerable amount of time/resources

Sample Follow-up Telephone Script: ***(insert questions/items specific to event)***

Hi, my name is _____ and I am calling from the Event planning committee from the Discovery Evening at Algonquin College. I was just wondering if you had a few minutes to talk to me about the event you attended on January 17th.

First, I'd like to thank-you for taking the time to speak to me. Is there anything that stands out in your mind, good or bad, about the Discovery Evening?

Do you have any comments or suggestions about the parking? Length? People present (sponsors, booths, etc)? Food/Beverage? Volunteers?

Thank-you again for taking the time to speak to me and if anything else comes to mind that you think would help us improve this event, please feel free to contact me at _____.

In Person

- **Focus Group**
  - Works well for obtaining event organizer's/volunteer's feedback
  - Allows people to come to a consensus on some issues
  - Positive and negative aspects are discussed
  - Easy to come to an overall 'feel' for how the event with because you can read people's tones/body language
  - Hard to round up general public participants to attend
  - Time consuming

- Resources required – volunteers to run it, food/beverages, meeting space, tape recorder

Items needed for a Focus Group

- Space to accommodate group with chairs/couches
- Food and beverage for participants
- Recording device so you are able to re-listen in order not to miss anyone
- Someone to record the session (secretary)
- Someone to lead the group
- Someone to watch body language/facial reactions of participants
- Incentive (i.e. gift or cash) to participants

Sample Questions to Ask

To get the conversation rolling at a Focus Group it is necessary to suggest topics to the group, but **not to influence** their discussion with questions that lead them to a certain opinion.

Examples of non-leading questions:

"What did you think about the décor of the room?"

"Are there any issues concerning parking that you would like to see addressed for next year?"

- **On-Site Booth for Suggestions/Comments**
  - Instantaneous feedback
  - May only get 'intense' responses. For example: angry attendees, or very pleased participants – this may not give you representative feedback
  - Could be as simple as an open laptop for people to leave comments on or a ballot-drop box

Written

- **On-Site Survey**
  - Time efficient
  - People will stop and fill it out
  - The event is fresh in people's mind so you will receive an honest opinion
  - Will always have a few people who just want to complain and did not enjoy themselves
  - May cause congestion in the area where they are being filled out, must have good crowd flow/control
  - Must provide pens/pencils (extra cost)
  - Can entice people to fill out surveys by having a draw you can enter by filling out the survey
  - Instant results
  - Usually a large number of responses
  - Can cause paper waste (vs. using email)

    - Must have a method in place to summarize results – can be time consuming

Please see attached example

- **Email Survey**
    - Saves paper
    - Must have everyone's email address – some people do not like to give out this personal information
    - Will not get 100% responses
    - Email may end up in bulk
    - Must be easy/not time consuming for people to respond
    - Chance to win a prize may entice participants

- **Fax Survey**
    - Not many people have fax machines for personal use
    - Survey may get thrown out as "spam"
    - Must have everyone's fax number
    - A lot of paper waste
    - Responses may not come back clear

Quantitative

- **By Invitation**
    - By sending out invitations you have an upper limit to how many people will be attending
    - If people RSVP you will know who's attending and who isn't

- **Door Counter**
    - Accurate if only one entrance is being used, otherwise hard to track bodies
    - Hard to track if people have in-and-out privileges

- **Sign-in Sheets**
    - Must make people aware they are there
    - Easier to track if people have pre-registered for the event, less time consuming this way
    - Can be time consuming for attendees
    - Can cause congestion at doorways

- **Registration**
    - Not everyone who registers attends the event

    - Registration and sign-in sometimes go hand-in-hand to get accurate numbers
    - Must account for those who will just show up without registering

- **Website Hits**
    - If your event has a website you can check how many hits it has received to measure how many people have shown an interest in your event
    - Not very accurate
    - People may stumble onto website by mistake
    - People may want to attend, but are unavailable
    - People may get all the information they are looking for off the website and not attend the event in person
    - One person may be checking the website for several others