How to evaluate activities

From The CLEAR GUIDE v1, written by Les Robinson for Mission Australia March 2009 www.enablingchange.com.au

When you do activities you'll want to report back to your members, supporters and funders. You'll also want to learn how to do them better next time. Collecting simple information to evaluative effectiveness is therefore vital.

This information becomes part of the story of your group. It lets you celebrate success, and gives you a credible story to tell supporters about what your group has achieved.

1) Decide what information to collect

Collecting evaluative information is simple and easy if you decide how to do it *before* the event happens.

Here are some ideas:

- ☐ Appoint someone to count heads.
- ☐ Take plenty of photos.
- ☐ Keep a scrap book of photos, press clippings, letters etc
- ☐ Keep a record of phone inquiries you receive.
- ☐ Keep a members' register.
- ☐ At meetings or events, circulate a simple feedback sheet asking questions like:
  - How satisfied were you with this event?
  - Did your confidence to do …….. increase?
  - How well were your questions answered?
  - What was the best part of the event, for you?
  - Will you come back? If not, why not?

2) Appoint people to collect the information

Decide who will be in charge of collecting feedback. When activities occur, appoint individuals to collect different kinds of evidence and report them back to the main feedback collector.

3) At intervals, review the evidence you've collected

Every few meetings, hold a short discussion, asking:

- What was the most unexpected or inspiring result we achieved since we last met?

- What have we learnt about being effective as a group?

- How could we improve our activities next time?

- How can we improve as a group?

Keep a record of what you decide. If you decide to make improvements, nominate someone to be responsible for them.

Evaluating meetings

It's vital to know whether participants are satisfied with meetings and events. Here are two simple evaluation tools that let you assess participant satisfaction and give you ideas for improvement.

1) Feedback form

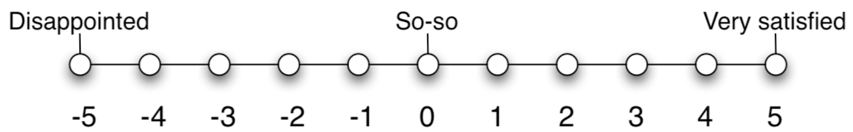
The simplest way to evaluate a meeting or activity is to distribute a form at the start of the session and remind participants to compete and return it before they leave.

Make sure you ask no more than 6 questions. Make sure people know they are not expected to put their names on the forms.

Here is an example:

Tell us what you think

How satisfied are you about this session/meeting/workshop?



What was the best thing in the session?

What was the worst thing in the session?

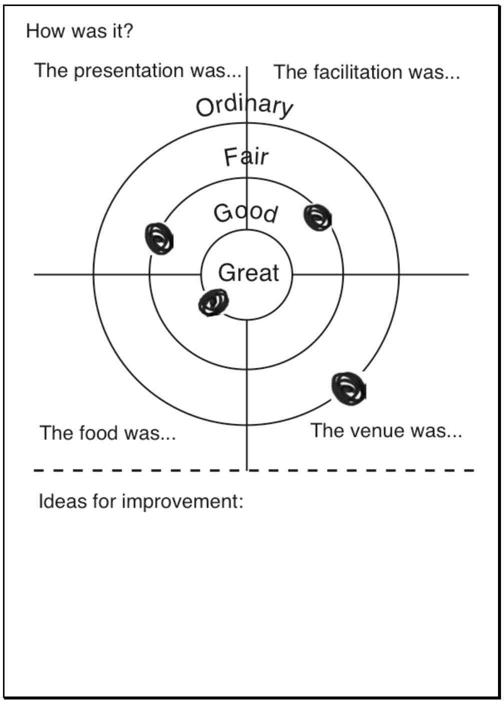
What could be improved?

The most important thing I learnt?

Will I come to another meeting?

2) Dart Board method

Give each participant an A4 sheet drawn up like a Dart Board that looks like this:



Ask each participant to mark it with a blob, cross or dot to assess four questions about the meeting or event (you can ask any questions you like!). At the bottom is a space for them to add ideas for improvement. Ask them to complete the sheet and drop it in a box on the way out.

Useful resources

Paul Bullen's evaluation page:
www.mapl.com.au/evaluation/eval0.htm

An excellent, basic how-to guide for monitoring and evaluation is:
Phil Bartle's Handbook of Monitoring:
www.scn.org/ip/cds/cmp/hemon.htm

For more evaluation tools, see:
CoCreate: a facilitators' guide: Part 4 – Just in Time Tools
www.enablingchange.com.au/CoCreate_v1.A4.pdf