

Seeing How We Are Doing



Almost immediately after your team comes up with its tobacco control plan and launches it (and sometimes even before!), people will start asking how you are doing. Some people will want to know because they are really interested in your work. Others will want to know because they want to be sure that the resources you spend on tobacco control are used well. And there will be a few who want to know because they would like to see you fail.

No matter who asks or why, when you are asked about your progress, you need to be able to respond with a clear, factual, and honest statement of what has happened. To be able to do this, your team will need some mechanism for tracking progress and determining how well you are doing against the plan you have created.

Evaluation is the process of determining whether you are doing what you planned to do in the time you said and, if not, determining what adjustments you might make to get on track. Evaluation also helps you to plan for programs in the future by providing you with information on what has and what has not worked.

Evaluation is one of the most powerful management tools available to us on an ongoing basis, yet it is often avoided. People sometimes see evaluation as a difficult and highly technical process that not everyone can engage in or they resent the time and resources that it takes to do the evaluation, resources that could otherwise be spent on programs in their view. Nevertheless, evaluation is a critical component of achieving excellence in tobacco control. This section outlines some ideas about evaluation.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Types of Evaluation

There are four main types of evaluation:

Formative evaluation - assesses the strengths and weaknesses of your plan or activities before they are fully implemented. This type of evaluation allows you to make changes in your approach before you begin full implementation. For example, before you launch a tobacco control poster campaign, you could try different ideas for the poster out on members of the public to be sure they understand the message you are delivering. This could be done through talking to the 'people on the street' or by focus groups.



Process evaluation - assesses whether the plan is being implemented as it was designed and whether it is reaching the people that you were trying to reach. This type of evaluation will help you to make sure that everything you planned for is in place and working. Going back to the poster campaign example, let's say you planned to distribute 50 posters to businesses on November 1st in time for ACS' Great American Smokeout. Process evaluation would let you know if that happened as you planned and, if not, where the plan broke down.

Outcome evaluation - evaluates the short-term effects of the program on the intended audience. This type of evaluation usually consists of a comparison of the knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to tobacco use of the intended audience

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before and after your program (e.g. secondhand smoke policies in local business, placement of tobacco products in retail stores, adoption of tobacco use prevention curricula in schools, knowledge of culturally specific prevention and cessation programs). Again, with the poster campaign example, in an outcome evaluation you would like to know how many people saw your posters, whether they understood them, whether they did anything as a result of seeing them, and what they did.

Impact evaluation - *evaluates the long-term results of the program and changes or improvements in health status (e.g. sickness and death rates due to tobacco use, long-term quit rates). It is hard in looking at impact measures to tie a specific activity to specific tobacco control outcomes. For example, it would be very hard to say how many people stopped using cigarettes on a long term basis as a result of your poster campaign. We know that what really works in tobacco control is for people to be exposed to many different messages and activities about tobacco use. At the community level, impact evaluation may be very difficult for most to do.*

Outcome and impact evaluations tell you *what* effect was achieved and whether or not your program made a difference over a specific amount of time. The formative and process evaluation measures will tell you *how* or *why* your effect was achieved (or not achieved). As you plan for evaluation, it will be important to include a combination of these evaluation measures so that you have a complete picture of what is happening.

[Note: there are many different terms people use to describe evaluation types. For example, some people use the terms 'outcome' and 'impact' exactly opposite of the way we have above. In the end, make sure everyone knows what is meant by the various terms you use. That is far more important than a lengthy debate of which terms are 'correct.']

Measures of Success

Planning for evaluation should start when you begin your initial program planning. As you are developing your plan, you will want to consider *what* evaluation measures you are going to use and *when* you are going to measure.

Go back to the work you did in assessing tobacco control indicators and assets earlier in this manual. The goal statements on the TCS chart in Appendix 1B show some examples of measures that apply to each indicator. For each priority indicator you work on your tobacco control team will have to determine what the measure of success will be.

Let's take an example from Appendix 1B.

Indicator - *Extent of tobacco advertisements in magazines, newspapers, and other print media.*

Outcome - *Reduce the number of newspapers that carry tobacco advertising in TitanTown County to 0% within 2 years.*

Strategy - *Education/awareness and voluntary policy.*

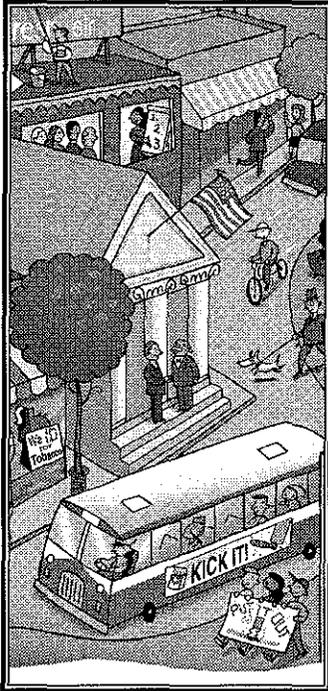
Activity - *Individually appeal to the owners and editors of each newspaper in the county and ask for a voluntary policy against accepting tobacco advertising.*

Formative evaluation - *Test a 'case statement' to convince newspaper owners and editors of the value of the policy with several newspaper owners in the adjacent county.*

Process evaluation - *Count the number of editors and owners you met with and tally their reactions to your initial contact. Count the number of follow-up contacts made by your team and reactions to them. Count the number of follow-up contacts made to your team from owners and editors. Count the number and analyze the content of newspaper stories and letters to the editor on this topic.*

Outcome evaluation - *Tally the percentage of the newspapers in the county that adopted the voluntary policy at 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years into the plan.*

Impact evaluation - *None tied just to this activity.*



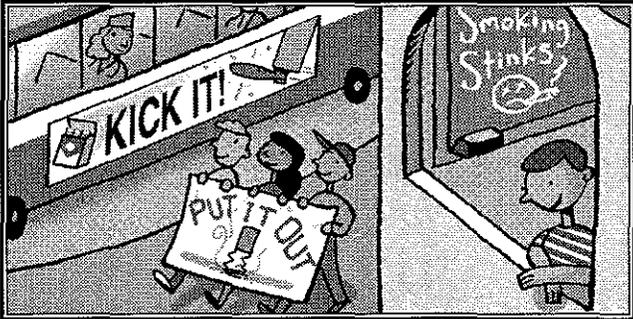
Sharing your results

Once you have some evaluation results, you will want to share what you have learned with your community. Have a specific plan in mind to report to your community what you have accomplished. Be proactive - get out there and tell your story! Doing so will help to build awareness of your efforts and increase the buy-in or support from your community. It will also do much to minimize any opposition to your efforts.

How is your tobacco control group functioning?

In addition to evaluating whether the program is meeting its goals, the tobacco control group needs to assess itself on how well it is functioning. Assessing how you are functioning and then making the necessary changes will help to move your overall tobacco control efforts forward.

LESSONS LEARNED

- *Planning for evaluation needs to occur simultaneously with program planning. Each priority selected by the group for action needs clearly identified outcomes that the community agrees will measure the success of the effort.*
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- *Use a combination of evaluation measures to give you a complete picture of the progress of your program.*
 - *Communities are limited in the types of evaluation that might be conducted locally by the resources that are available to them for that purpose . Be creative. You will find that you can include some form of evaluation even with the most limited resources. Identify other state and local data collection efforts that are related to tobacco control and monitor them for data which may be useful to the effort in your community.*
 - *Repeat the community assessment (Section 3 of this manual) annually in order to see how your program is doing over time.*
 - *Impact evaluation may be difficult for your community. Though it is the most comprehensive of the four types of evaluation, it takes the most time, is the most expensive, and is often the most difficult to prove. You may need to concentrate your efforts and limited resources on formative, process, and outcome evaluation and share your results with other larger tobacco control programs in your state or area that are able to do impact evaluation.*
 - *All of your evaluation results are useful. Your successes are the areas in which you can show improvement over the previous year. These are the areas that you may want to continue or enhance next year in order to build upon what you have already*

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done. The areas that did not show improvement are your community's needs and gaps. These are the areas that you will need to work on in future years. Discuss your evaluation results with others in your tobacco control group to determine what the results mean and what you can learn from them for next year.

- *The tobacco control group should tell its constituents and the public what they are doing and what they have accomplished. An aggressive plan for assuring some form of periodic reporting to the public is required.*
- *All community and tobacco control program participants need to be able to effectively describe the program and its rationale and accomplishments to the public.*
- *Annually assess how your own tobacco control group is functioning related to decision making, shared responsibility, leadership, communication, and inclusion of different segments of your community.*

GETTING STARTED

Here are some ideas for getting started with looking at how your plan or your program is doing:

- ▲ *Have a group discussion of the different types of evaluation measures that might be appropriate for your community. Do this in the context of developing your plan once you have set priorities.*
- ▲ *Contact the public health surveillance and/or tobacco control specialist at your state or local health department or the American Cancer Society to ask if they or others are collecting data both around the state (for comparison) and in your area (to share) that might be relevant to your evaluation needs.*
- ▲ *Review your tobacco control plan to make sure that you have included a combination of evaluation measures.*

HELPFUL TOOLS

Four tools have been developed to help you work on your evaluation efforts.

Types of Evaluation - to provide more information on types of evaluation and options given different resource levels.

Program Decision Making Based on Evaluation - to provide some questions that should be addressed throughout the evaluation process.

How Our Group is Functioning - to provide a framework for assessing how the tobacco control team is working.

Tool 6 A

Types of Evaluations

| Evaluation Type | Description | Example | Evaluation Activities With Minimal Resources | Evaluation Activities With Significant Resources |
|------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Formative | Done prior to implementation | Pretesting a television advertisement | Informal interviews or group meetings | Formal interviews or focus groups |
| Process | Assessment of the processes of implementation | Monitoring the level of adherence to staff training curricula | Checklists or records reviews | Third party audits of records and on site monitoring |
| Outcome | Assessment of short term results | Changes in public awareness of the ETS in workplaces | Small surveys or written evaluation responses after an activity | Large scale pre- and post-evaluations of the target audience |
| Impact | Assessment of long term results | Changes in the proportion of the workforce covered by ETS policies | Small telephone surveys or mailed questionnaires | Large scale surveys including direct calls or site visits |

Tool 6 B

Program Decision Making Based on Evaluations

Identify each activity the group has committed to implement. These should include programmatic activities as well as infrastructure activities (communication, media relations, resource development, etc.). For each activity, ask the following questions:

Prior To Implementation

1. Have we specifically planned for an evaluation of this effort?
2. Are the indicators of success clear and measurable?
3. Have we identified specific methods and timelines for monitoring the effort?
4. Who is responsible for monitoring, gathering, analysis and evaluation report writing?

During Implementation

5. Are we able to gather the data / information for the evaluation as planned?
6. Are we comfortable with the quality of the data / information we are receiving?
7. Does the initial data indicate any issues or problems that must be addressed immediately?

At Regular Intervals (e.g., quarterly)

8. What are the major findings as indicated by the evaluation results?
9. Are we in agreement as a group as to what the major findings are?
10. What changes in our effort, if any, are indicated by the findings?
11. Who should we communicate these findings to, and how?

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3. Think about the following statements. Do you agree or disagree? Also indicate what the group could do to improve in this area.

| Statement | Agree | Disagree | How can we improve in this area? |
|--|-------|----------|----------------------------------|
| We have a clear process for making decisions. | | | |
| Each of us has clearly defined roles and responsibilities. | | | |
| Leadership functions and activities are identified and shared appropriately. | | | |
| We show an appreciation of each other as people with differing perspectives, all contributing towards excellence in tobacco control. | | | |
| We are willing to deal with the hard issues. | | | |

4. Who else needs to be included in our tobacco control group to broaden our reach in different parts of the community and to increase our support?

5. Other comments/suggestions/issues to consider:

*Best Wishes For
Success In Becoming A:*

**COMMUNITY OF EXCELLENCE
IN TOBACCO CONTROL!**