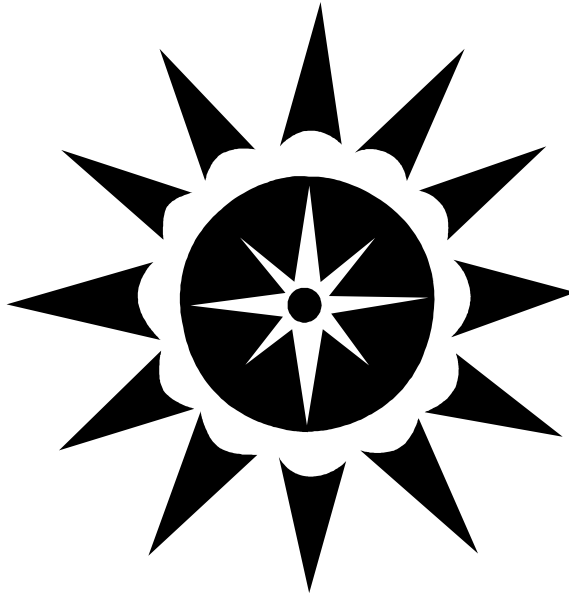


Developing Evaluation Surveys and The Use of Public Feedback in the Planning Process



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Getting Started

General Information on developing the “Game Plan” for soliciting public feedback

It is important to visualize the entire process of collecting information.

Considerations:

- * decide the various ways you will collect information
 - Written surveys
 - Phone interviews
 - Informal conversation with clientele
 - Internet web page
- * decide the purpose of the survey
- * decide the type of information you want to collect.
 - Participant satisfaction
 - Customer service
 - Needs assessment
 - Interests of current and potential users
 - Attitudes of clientele and potential clientele
 - Ideas on programs and services
- * determine who will provide information for each type of data collection
 - Current clientele
 - Members of various special interest groups
 - Non-users who are potential participants
 - Volunteers
- * develop a time line

After collecting information, what does the information mean?

Compute the statistics and tabulate the results

Organize the comments

Interpret the results

- Try to explain the findings

- Present the valuable information you have gathered that directly relates to the purpose of the survey

Make recommendations based on the findings

Caution should be taken with making bold “cause and effect” type of statements

- Relate findings to the demographic description of the data collected

- Relate findings to the return rate (the number of returned surveys compared to the number of surveys distributed)

- Caution on making recommendations based on results, depending on the return rate

Can I trust the data?

- Does the survey measure factors or traits desired to be measured? How dependable is the measure for consistently conveying the same meaning to readers?

The Survey Instrument

The different types of surveys

Written – mailed, distributed in seasonal program brochure, distributed to participants

Interview – phone scheduled interview, informal discussions

The Secret of Selecting the Right Questions

What kind of questions should I ask?

Forced Choice Questions

These types of questions provide a listing of all the possible choices for the person responding to the survey. By providing the possible answer, the person responding to the survey does not have to think up answers. The person merely has to select the response that best matches his/her thoughts. These types of questions are easy to record and take less time to record than opened ended questions.

Forced choice questions include:

- ◆ Agree to disagree scale type of questions
- ◆ Satisfied to dissatisfied scale type if question
- ◆ Rating and Ranking type of questions
- ◆ Yes and No Questions
- ◆ True and False Questions
- ◆ Matching type of Listing

Open Ended Questions

Open ended questions provide an opportunity for the person responding to write things they think about the topic. The person responding must determine what information to write on the survey. Often people do not want to think this hard and may not respond to open ended questions. It takes more time to respond to an open ended question than it does to respond to a force choice type of question. Open ended questions are difficult to record the information and it takes more time to record the answers to open ended questions than it does for forced choice type of questions.

Open ended questions could include the following:

- ◆ Please share what worked well for you this summer at day camp that you would recommend for use next year.
- ◆ Please list improvements you would make for the Junior Softball League program for next year.

Forced Choice and Open Ended

Sometimes professionals want to provide selection of the possible responses as well as give people an opportunity to provide feedback about their ideas on various topics. In these situations, yes and no questions could be used with "please explain" added to the end of the questions. By using this question format, you can quickly total answers and you can also allow participants a place for other comments.

The following are examples of a combination forced choice and open ended questions:

◆ Did the dates and times of the day camp meet the needs of your child (ren)?
__YES__ __NO__ Please explain_____

◆ Was the transportation support on time? YES____ NO____ Explain:_____

How to Use Public Feedback in the Planning Process

Inform public of how their feedback information will be used:

Advisory

Recommendation

Decision making - plans will be based on directly on results

Inform public on who will be using the information:

Executive director and staff

Planning committee

Planning consultants

Does it support the initial goals and objectives?

Care should be taken when designing the survey to make sure that the questions will provide you the information you really want.

Selection of the critical topics is important when designing the survey.

Do not try to collect too much information with one survey.

Should I re-write goals and objectives based on the feedback?

Considerations:

Should I address: a) goals and objectives for the survey; b) goals for the agency; and/or c) goals and objectives for the planning process?

What was the return rate? Does it reflect a large percentage of the community?

What are financial implications of making changes?

Should I eliminate some objectives based on the feedback?

What is the level (strong, moderate, and weak) of opinion with the feedback?