



UNIT-8

Evaluating Events

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand why events are evaluated.
- ✓ Discuss the objective setting and potential sources of information to evaluate events.
- ✓ Conduct a survey and produce a report based on the results.

Unit 8

Evaluating Events

This involves critically assessing the outcome of events to determine whether or not the objectives have been achieved. Evaluation requires the monitoring, observing and measuring of activities. The purpose of evaluation is to help the event manager measure the success of events, learning from previous events to help him/her improve future ones and to give adequate feedback to stakeholders.

Monitoring and evaluation help the event manager to understand the activities undertaken during the event and how best to perform these activities using the following features as measuring benchmarks:

- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Impact

Efficiency

Determining the efficiency of activities involves measuring whether an expected output has been achieved by supplying certain input parameters. The inputs may be time, money, workers and equipment, etc.

Effectiveness

This measures the overall performance of the plan in achieving some predefined objectives.

Impact

This measures whether a set of activities you have undertaken has been able to make a difference in solving a problem. It means having strategies that work to achieve an expected end product.

Why should Monitoring and Evaluation be carried out?

You should conduct monitoring and evaluation to ensure that you are meeting, at the very least, your main specifications in terms of your ability to make a difference or an impact. Monitoring helps you to review the progress of work; it also flags up problems to tackle and provides an understanding to help you adjust key parameters to make a major difference.

Mistakes may occur during the execution of events and these are acceptable, albeit undesirable. It is unacceptable, however, to fail to learn from your previous mistakes and repeat them.

Purpose of monitoring and evaluation:

- Enhance the identification of problems and their causes

- Provide an avenue for solving problems
- Question assumptions and strategies adopted
- Reconsider your goals and methods of attaining them
- Provide information and insight
- Motivate you to use information obtained effectively
- Enhance the chances of contributing to making a difference

Monitoring involves:

- Setting standards or specifications for efficiency, effectiveness and impact
- Establishing systems to gather information relating to the specifications
- Collecting and recording information
- Analysing information collected
- Making management decisions based on information collected

Evaluation involves:

- Setting goals for projects
- Identifying the kind of impact an organisation wants to make
- Determining whether the organisation was able to make the impact it had hoped for and identifying reasons why it could not achieve all of its objectives
- How effective and efficient are the methods or strategies being used by an organisation? Is there room for improvements and how can these be implemented?

How to evaluate an event:

Evaluation is a continuous process undertaken throughout all phases of the event, and it requires time and resources for it to be effective.

The stages of evaluation are as follows:

- Defining the objectives of the event
- Choosing method(s) for the evaluation of events
- Data gathering
- Data analysis and interpretation
- Summarising the results of evaluation in the form of a report
- Sharing the final reports with all stakeholders and publishing them in the media

The first step is to define the objectives of the event, i.e. what you want to achieve and the process for achieving your goals. If your objective is to increase the number of guests who attend the event by a certain percentage more than the previous event of a similar nature, you may need to perform an

evaluation by counting the number of tickets purchased, the number of food purchase transactions and the number of parked vehicles, or use police estimates.

If the other objective is to increase profit by a specific percentage more than a previous session, the evaluation of this objective after the event can be undertaken by analysing the bank balance sheets to obtain this information and the reasons for the increase, i.e., whether the increase was from high ticket prices or a higher number of guests in attendance.

Surveys might also be used to evaluate people's satisfaction with an event. Alternatively, you might measure their reaction to the entertainment component or how much longer they stayed at the venue after the event.

Evaluation Methods

Methods used to evaluate events include the following:

- Direct observation by the event manager and/or staff
- Monitoring progress of event during staff meeting to discuss progress reports
- Analysing income reports or financial reports
- Analysing all reports on the event from the police, health and safety staff, security personnel, etc.
- debriefing of key staff to obtain feedback on the event
- Paying attention to the content of media reports on the event
- Conducting a survey of participants at the event including sponsors and stakeholders
- Determining the economic impact of the event on the community

These methods should provide sufficient data for analysis and for reporting on the outcome of the event to stakeholders.

Event Surveys

Surveys can generate valuable insights to aid your market efforts in the future because they are able to provide the following vital details on attendees:

- Age groups
- Level of income
- Place of residence
- Source of advert that published information about the event
- Means of transportation to the event
- Nature of groups to which they belong - i.e., couples, families or companies, etc.
- Their opinion on certain aspects of the event

Types of Survey

- Direct interviews
- Written questionnaires
- Telephone surveys

There are several factors that determine the appropriate type of method to use. These factors include the type of event, availability of resources and the kind of audience present. The effectiveness of each method will vary depending on the prevailing circumstances. Event managers who design evaluation tools should consider the cultural context in order to choose the most effective and acceptable survey method. Consideration should be given to the cultural background of the people attending the event. Some useful questions to ask when deciding on an appropriate culturally-sensitive evaluation tool include:

- Are the data collection methods relevant and culturally sensitive to the population being evaluated?
- Have you considered how different methods may or may not work in various cultures?
- Have you explored how different groups prefer to share information (e.g., orally, in writing, one-on-one, in groups, through the arts)?
- Do the instruments consider potential language barriers that may inhibit some people from understanding the evaluation questions?
- Do the instruments consider the cultural context of the respondents?
- Are multiple methods being used, to enable information to be analysed in a variety of ways?

EVENT ATTENDEE SURVEY (Sample)

Event _____

Date _____

1. Age Group: _____

Under 15 (no more questions) 15-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46+ ☐

Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Was your visit here today motivated by the event? Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, what was the purpose of your visit?

☐ Holiday

☐ Visit friends/relatives

☐ Business

☐ Other _____ specify

3. Where are you from?

List postcode

Overseas - list country _____

4. How many nights are you staying? _____

5. Where are you staying? (suburb) _____

6. What type of accommodation are you using?

☐ Hotel/motel/resort

☐ Guest house/bed and breakfast

☐ Self catering cottage/apartment

☐ Caravan park/camping ground

☐ With family/friends

☐ Other _____ specify

7. How did you travel to the event?

☐ Car

☐ Public transport

☐ Friends

☐ Air

8. Other than the event, what activities/attractions did you or do you intend to engage in during your visit? _____

Please estimate how much you have spent or intend to spend per person during your visit including transport, food, accommodation, souvenirs and entertainment

☐ £0-£50

☐ £51-£100

☐ £101-£150

☐ £151-250

☐ £251+

9. How did you find out about the event?

☐ Brochures/posters

☐ Newspaper

☐ Radio

☐ TV

☐ Internet

☐ Word of mouth

☐ Tourist Information Centre

☐ Other _____ specify

10. Have you attended this event in previous years?

If yes, then which year did you last attend? _____

Why did you attend this year? _____

11. Do you intend to attend the event next year? Yes ☐ No ☐

12. How would you rate the following aspects of the event? (optional question)

	Poor	satisfactory	good	excellent
a) Venue				
b) Parking				
c) Value for money				
d) Quality of food				
e) Variety of food				
f) Entertainment for adults				
g) Entertainment for children				
h) Seating				
i) Toilets				
j) Shade				
k) Overall presentation of event				
l) Crowd management				
m) Signage/information				
n) Overall site presentation/layout				

Sample survey report

Attendees:

Male:	43%
Female:	57%
<15:	11%
15-24:	38%
25-44:	37%
45-64:	12%
65>:	2%
Children:	28%
Adults:	72%

Marketing:

Word of mouth	32%
Radio	9%
TV	18%
Newspaper	28%
Posters	6%
Other	15%

Motivation to Attend: (in order)

- Fun
- Kids
- Socialise
- Music

- Food
- Involvement in festival
- Support Lismore

Any Improvements:

- Better weather (11% answers)
- More rides/activities/freebies/stalls - bigger is better
- More for toddlers/kids/teenagers
- Have competitions/activities with prizes
- Improve parking (especially peak time before street parade)
- Put survey in Echo and ask for new ideas
- More country music
- Area could be more concentrated
- Youth Concert re-located (too loud for shops)
- Many comments said 'congratulations'

Questionnaires

These are designed to provide simple, cheap and effective modes of data collection from a large number of guests at an event. Questionnaires are used to evaluate either the community-building process or the outcome (results) of the process.

Utility of Questionnaires

Following on from the above description of questionnaires, when using questionnaires for evaluating a process of work, you may want to ask questions relating to how activities were performed by workers, and when using them to evaluate the outcome of a process, you may ask how the process might be enhanced.

Types of Questions

You might use open-ended or forced-choice types of questions. Forced-choice questionnaires require people taking part in the survey to choose from a limited number of responses to questions by ticking a box or circling a letter or number. The forced-choice questionnaire is easier to analyse than the open-ended type because the latter produces a wide range of responses to the questions asked.

Example of a Forced-Choice Question

A forced-choice questionnaire might contain questions and answers such as the following:

"Which of the following best describes the degree to which young people were involved in making decisions about the project?"

- No involvement
- Little involvement
- Moderate involvement
- Extensive involvement

Hints for Constructing Questionnaires

An understanding of evaluation questions is required before deciding whether or not questionnaires are the best tool for obtaining the data you need. You will also need to determine the category of people who will be asked to complete the questionnaires. The questions should be grouped according to topics, with forced-choice questions appearing first before requests for personal data such as age, gender etc. The layout should allow large margins and spaces between questions to make it easy to digest them.

Administering Questionnaires

There are several ways to administer questionnaires and each has its own weakness. You may use the Internet, mail, face-to-face conversations, interviews, groups or telephone to gather information from people. The web-based approach requires internet access, and it is very efficient at compiling results quickly and automatically. The mailing approach generally generates fewer responses but can reach a large number of people. Face-to-face interviews are ideal for obtaining complete information but they are time-consuming. The responses from groups are quick but the information collected may be insufficient.

Interviewing

When conducting interviews for the purpose of collecting information to assist in organising an event, you should approach them in a conversational manner while assuring the interviewees that the information will be used for the purpose of the event only. Detailed notes must be taken when probing and asking follow-up questions, and you should maintain a neutral stance throughout.

You must assure the interviewee that their anonymity will be preserved but this may become difficult if he/she is the only source of the information you receive.

Data Analysis

Common themes and divergent views are determined from the interviews when all the interviewers meet to discuss their findings.

Focus Groups

Information may be obtained from this 'small gathering' of people who have been purposely invited to take part in the survey by filling in questionnaires.

Classifying Expectations

You must clearly understand your purpose in wanting to interview a focus group. Interviewing focus groups requires you to ask specific questions, bordering on your expectations from the group interview, the type of evaluation you are seeking to undertake, and the exact information you require.

Observation

This involves watching and listening to people and taking notes on all activities in which they are engaged, the duration of their participation in these activities and the manner in which the activities are performed to help you evaluate the process or outcome of an event. Results may differ if more than one observer is involved. Besides, the behaviour of the people being observed may be affected by the presence of the observer.

What to observe:

- The setting, i.e., the environment and its influence on a particular set of behaviours
- The participants: the kind of people present and their purpose and role
- What are the people doing and is there a pattern?
- Activities and interactions: how do people perform activities and interact with one another?
- Frequency and duration: observe how often an activity is performed, noting the beginning and the end and establishing whether it is a regular occurrence

Further Reading:

- ✓ *The Complete Guide to Successful Event Planning* by Shannon Kilkenny
- ✓ *Event Management: A Professional and Developmental Approach* by Greg Damster and Dimitri Tassiopoulos