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Taking Evaluation Further

Review

The previous newsletter addressed what evaluation is and why, on many levels, it is so important to our agency. It covered basic evaluation concepts, reasons to evaluate, and the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model – which provides a useful guide for our own program evaluation efforts since our levels of client change matches closely to those in Kirkpatrick’s model.

At this point, you may be asking, “*all of that is good information but how do I actually get started with an evaluation of my program?*” This newsletter addresses that question in a practical way. It covers the “evaluation roadmap.” The roadmap presents in detail the different paths (or options) Extension educators can take in conducting a program evaluation, and the specific steps within each path. The first two paths include the use of scannable forms.

The Evaluation Roadmap: An Overview

The “Evaluation Roadmap” is a graphical representation of the paths available to you for conducting evaluations (see page 3). The roadmap serves as a practical overview of the evaluation process and incorporates the use of scanning technology. Each path has a number of steps – both in the planning and implementation stages of evaluation.

A key feature to note about the roadmap: although the number of steps in each path is the same, the number of steps that must be completed by you (vs. Extension Organizational Development) is different. Some paths require you to do more than others.

The path you follow depends on: 1) the type of evaluation you need to conduct and 2) whether you can (or want to) take advantage of scanning technology. In the course of a year, it is very possible that you would use all three paths in the roadmap.

The following points are important to note concerning the colors on the roadmap:

Steps in the planning stage of evaluation have the pale orange background.

Steps in the implementation stage of evaluation have the blue background.

Steps that **do not** require a decision or action by you are green.

Steps that **do** require a decision or action by you are yellow.

Links to helpful resources for individual steps are brown.

Here is a summary of the four paths, with Kirkpatrick's corresponding level of evaluation noted as well:

First Path – Output Evaluation using Scanning Technology

Follow this path to use the scannable, standard customer satisfaction form available at <http://agrillife.org/od/evaluation/scan-forms/download-forms/customer-satisfaction-scan-forms/cs-standard-forms/>. Adult and youth versions are available. Once the form is downloaded, only three steps in the process require action on your part (duplicating the form, administering the forms, and developing an interpretation of results). This path is purely a measurement of customer satisfaction (Level 1 of Kirkpatrick's model).

Second Path – Output + Outcome Evaluation using Scanning Technology

Follow this path to use one of the scannable customer satisfaction forms with a client change section available at <http://agrillife.org/od/evaluation/scan-forms/download-forms/customer-satisfaction-scan-forms/cs-plusout-forms/>. The process is identical to the first path with one exception – you develop your own items that are added to the client change section. This path measures both customer satisfaction and change in understanding using a retrospective post (Levels 1 and 2 of Kirkpatrick's model), and to a limited extent, change in behavior or adoption of best practices and technology (Level 3 of Kirkpatrick's model).

Third Path – Outcome Evaluation using Scanning Technology

Follow this path to use an outcome evaluation instrument developed by Extension Organizational Development or Extension specialist:

4-H Outcome Forms

<http://agrillife.org/od/evaluation/scan-forms/download-forms/outcome-programs-4-h-scan-forms/>

ANR Outcome Forms

<http://agrillife.org/od/evaluation/scan-forms/download-forms/outcome-programs-scan-forms-anr/>

Generic Outcome Forms

<http://agrillife.org/od/evaluation/scan-forms/download-forms/outcome-program-scan-forms-generic/>

Tests of Knowledge Forms

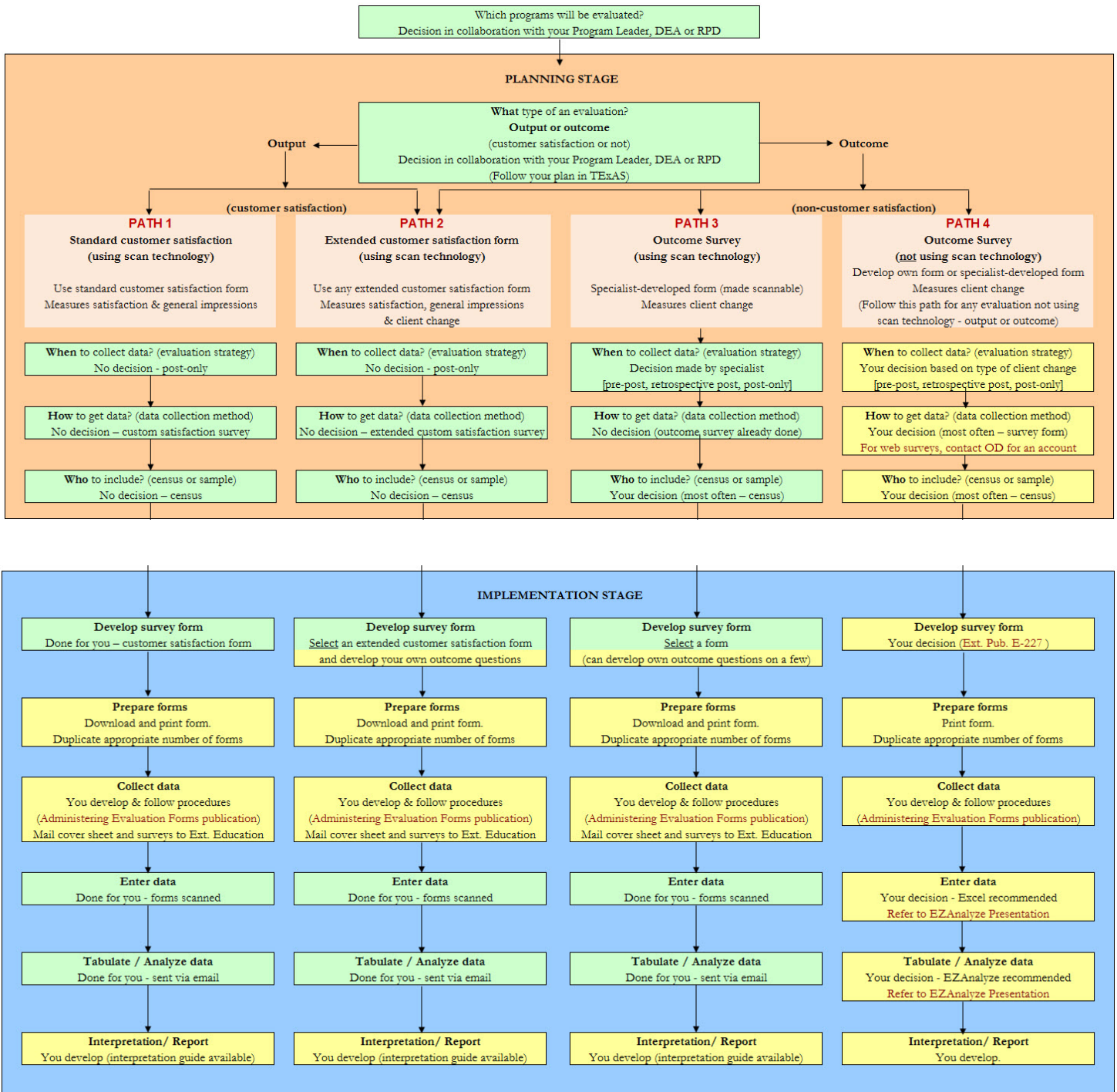
<http://agrillife.org/od/evaluation/scan-forms/download-forms/scan-forms-for-outcome-programs-tests-of-knowledge/>

Some of the instruments allow you to enter your own items in a client change section; other allow no changes at all. None of these instruments include customer satisfaction. This path measures typically measures change in understanding (or frequency of behavior) using a retrospective post (Levels 1 and 2 of Kirkpatrick's model), and to a limited extent, change in behavior or adoption of best practices and technology (Level 3 of Kirkpatrick's model).

Fourth Path – Outcome Evaluation

Follow this path to develop your own outcome evaluation instrument. This is the traditional path of evaluation without use of scanning technology. All steps in the process are completed by you including developing instrument(s), collecting data, entering data, analyzing results, and developing an interpretation of results. This path can be used for all four levels of Kirkpatrick's model.

Extension Fundamentals



Steps that **do not** require a decision or action by you are green.

Steps that **do** require a decision or action by you are yellow.

There are four evaluation strategies typically used in Extension:

Post-only (post data collected at or after conclusion of program)

Pre-post (pre data collected before program; post data collect at or after conclusion of program; ID matching recommended)

Retrospective post (pre and post data collected at the conclusion of a program). This is discussed in more detail below.

Pre-post series (data collect at the conclusion of an individual lesson in a series – post data for current lesson – pre data for next lesson; ID matching recommended)

Timing of Client Change

By their nature, some types of client change can be expected to occur by the conclusion of the program while others cannot reasonably be expected to occur until months or years after the program. Your evaluation strategy (timing of the post measure) should be appropriate for the type of client change your program addressed.

Short-term (at conclusion of program or shortly thereafter)

Participation, use of products or services, knowledge gain, attitude change, skills acquisition, some behavior changes, intention to adopt.

Long-term (3 months minimum; 6 months or longer better)

Behavior change, economic changes, adoption of best practices, adoption of new technology, knowledge retention, skills retention.

Retrospective Post Evaluation

In Extension, a commonly-used method to determine measure change in understanding, attitude, or behavior is the retrospective post design. This design overcomes potential problems with participants inaccurately assessing their baseline (where they are in terms of understanding, attitude, or behavior before the program). Please read this article for more information: <http://www.joe.org/joe/2003august/tt4.ph>. Most of the scannable forms available in Path 2 of the roadmap utilize this design. However, it is important for you to recognize that this method has both strengths and weaknesses. These strengths and weaknesses are important to assess before selecting this method (see table below).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less likely to offend clientele who do not like being put in the role of students or research subjects required to complete both pre-tests and post-tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May introduce a desire for clientele to exhibit a learning effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used when traditional pre-tests are not possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges traditional methodological logic, since both predate and postdata are collected after educational intervention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unlike traditional pre-tests, does not risk negatively impacting intervention effectiveness by possibly introducing terms and concepts before clientele are ready for them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May introduce threat to validity such as memory recall, history, and regression to the mean
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides data that, with other supporting data, can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a educational intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibility of fabricated and biased responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be perceived as less rigorous, and therefore less convincing, than other evaluation approaches