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## **Interpretation – Analyzing Results and Telling the Story**

Accountability of our programs is a high priority within Texas AgriLife Extension Service. It allows us to tell our story as well as make corrective adjustments for program improvement. Interpreting evaluation results and marketing those results to stakeholders are critical activities. Without them, how will the community and stakeholders know the impact of our programming efforts results of the evaluation?

The previous two newsletters focused on designing and implementing an effective strategy for evaluating our educational programs. Learning how to effectively take the results of the evaluation and develop a positive message to share with stakeholders is the next step in completing the cycle of an educational program. Among the most important purposes that an evaluation can serve is uncovering any beneficial changes that have occurred as a result of the program. Articulating those changes, and helping stakeholders to recognize and value the importance of them is what our interpretation efforts are targeted to accomplish.

When interpreting program results, the Extension educator should address the “3 R’s”. These are: Relevance, Response, and Results.

Relevance – Why is it important to address this issue through the educational program?

Response – How did Texas AgriLife Extension Service respond to the relevant program?

Results – What are the results? What happened as a result of the educational program?

Answering the “3 R’s” provides the stakeholder with sufficient background and evidence of what the program was, how it was addressed, and what happened as a result of the program. Typically, the Extension educator would develop a one or two page summary using the “3 R’s” as a guide. Be creative. Develop an engaging picture of the program that that will draw the stakeholder in. Use tables, graphs, and / or pictures to demonstrate the impact of the program.

Most organizations have numerous stakeholders. Extension educators must decide who they should market their results to. Some examples include:

- The Community – through media outlets if possible.
- The County Committee
- Program participants
- Extension colleagues
- Commissioner's court and county judge, other local elected officials
- Texas AgriLife Extension Service administrators / County Directors / District Extension Administrators / Regional Program Directors
- State legislators
- Grantors
- Commodity boards or other special interest organizations

The message could, and likely will, be slightly different for each of these audiences. Your interpretation piece should be saved in an easily accessible electronic format so that the items of most importance to a particular audience can be highlighted or moved to a position of higher prominence in the document. There is an excellent, step-by-step PowerPoint presentation available for download, as well as a number of examples of quality interpretation pieces to utilize as a guide from the Organizational Development Unit's website: <http://od.tamu.edu/successstories.ht>. Other recommended readings and resources are listed below to help Agents sharpen skills that are so important to the continued success of the organization.

Texas AgriLife Extension Service's mission is "improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high-quality, relevant education." Accordingly, it is imperative that each Extension educator in the agency develop educational programs in a strategic and systematic way. Our agency's program development model provides these steps to address when developing educational programs. The success of our agency is based on providing quality, relevant programs that produce defensible results; making certain that all our stakeholders are fully informed about these programs and results.

### **Recommended Readings:**

- Boleman, C. and Dodd, C. (2007b). Volunteer administration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: preparing the leadership advisory board for success: Visioning. College Station, Texas: The Texas A&M University System.  
<http://texasvolunteer.tamu.edu/Advocacy%20E-442.pd>
- DeBord, K. (2005). Communicating program value of family life and parenting educational programs to decision makers. *Journal of Extension* 43(2).  
<http://www.joe.org/joe/2005april/iw2.shtm>
- Diem, K.G. (2003). Program development in a political world—It's all about impact. *Journal of Extension* 41(1). <http://www.joe.org/joe/2003february/a6.shtm>
- Kalambokidis, L. (2004). Identifying the public value in extension programs. *Journal of Extension* 42(2). <http://www.joe.org/joe/2004april/a1.shtm>