Have we Made a Difference?
Measuring the Value of Evaluations

CES National Capital Chapter Learning Event
November 28, 2007

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Agenda

- Introduction: Why measure the value of evaluation?

- Methods: Description of our toolkit and the processes we have used to develop it

- Initial findings

- Next steps

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Why do we do evaluation?

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Q: Why do we do evaluation?
A: To improve our health care

Q: Why do we do evaluation?
A: To better protect our environment

Q: Why do we do evaluation?
A: So children can have a better start in life

Q: Why do we do evaluation?
A: To make our world a better place
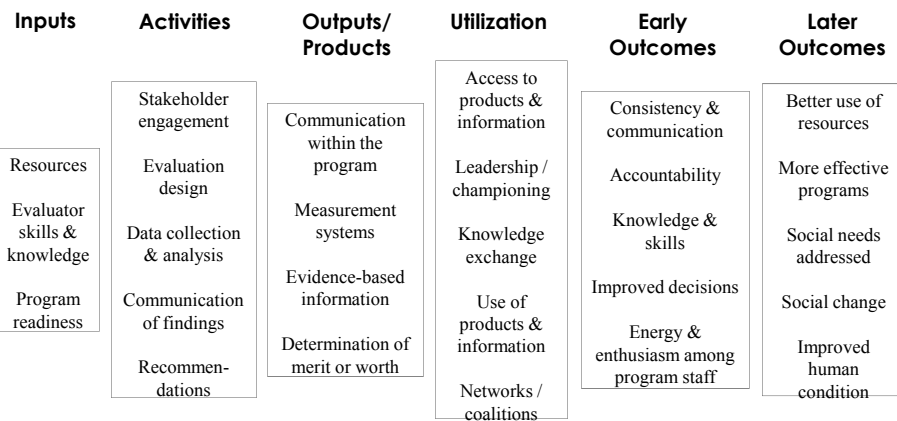

The Value of Evaluation?

- There is anecdotal evidence to support the assumption that evaluation is beneficial

- There is relatively little empirical evidence.

- We want to develop tools that we can use to:

  - measure the value of evaluation, and

  - test the assumption that evaluation is beneficial

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Toolkit Development

- Considerations:
  - Want to minimize demand on the "client", but still engage them
  - Clients more willing to talk on the phone than to fill out a form
  - Each evaluation is unique
  - Each evaluation has different goals
  - Want tools that will improve the evaluation
  - Want to measure more tangible results than client perceptions
  - Need to be able to analyse the data in the end
- Logic model
- Draft tools – currently being pilot tested

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Logic Model for Evaluation

Inputs	Activities	Outputs/ Products	Utilization	Early Outcomes	Later Outcomes
	Stakeholder engagement		Access to products & information	Consistency & communication	Better use of resources
Resources	Evaluation design	Communication within the program	Leadership / championing	Accountability	More effective programs
Evaluator skills & knowledge	Data collection & analysis	Measurement systems	Knowledge exchange	Knowledge & skills	Social needs addressed
Program readiness	Communication of findings	Evidence-based information	Use of products & information	Improved decisions	Social change
	Recommen- dations	Determination of merit or worth	Networks / coalitions	Energy & enthusiasm among program staff	Improved human condition

Feedback is welcome. Please send your comments to Rochelle: rochelle@cathexisconsulting.ca or 416-469-9954 x227

Toolkit

- Available at www.cathexisconsulting.ca/interesting/
- Six components:
  - Client goal-setting worksheet
  - Optional performance measures
  - Interim client interview
  - Final client interview
  - Follow-up client interview
  - Tools to help the evaluators reflect on and document the benefits

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Client Goal-Setting Worksheet

- Provides a list of potential evaluation benefits (described as "goals")
- Together with the evaluators, clients:
  - Rate the importance of each generic goal
  - Further specify the goals identified as "essential"
  - Think about how they might measure the achievement of the "essential" goals (optional)

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Performance Measures

- For clients who are interested in measuring goal achievement
- PMs developed collaboratively by evaluator & client
- Different measures used for each evaluation
- Evaluation project manager summarizes the results for the client at the end of the evaluation
- Examples:
  - Increases in evaluation knowledge among staff, as measured by a knowledge test pre- and post-
  - Improvements in a program, measured by tracking satisfaction/complaints over time

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Interim Client Interview

- Informal chat between evaluation project manager and client every 3 months or so
  - What's working well, what's not working well
  - What influence the evaluation has had so far
  - Review & revise client's goals for the evaluation
  - Make sure the evaluation is on track to achieve the goals, and if not, then correct

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Final Client Interview

- Conducted by someone other than the evaluation project manager about a month after the evaluation finishes:
  - Typical satisfaction questions
  - Use/intended use of the evaluation findings
  - Achievement of goals
  - What contributed to achievement of goals
  - Unanticipated outcomes of the evaluation

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Follow-up Client Interview

- Similar to the final client interview, but no satisfaction items

- One year after the evaluation is finished, or a suitable time frame depending on when goals are expected to be achieved

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Evaluator Tools

- Reflection guides to use during the evaluation

- Agenda for evaluation team reflection meeting at the end of the project

- Meta-evaluation database to store the information (not developed yet)

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Initial Findings from Piloting

- **Challenges**

  - Clients want to focus on outputs of our services, not outcomes

  - Client needs to be reminded periodically of what we are doing and why

  - To develop meaningful indicators (and measure them) requires client interest and time

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Initial Findings from Piloting

- **What worked?/Benefits**
  - Qualitative approach most appropriate at this stage
  - Satisfaction questions were well received
  - High response rate
  - Gained new knowledge on evaluation outcomes
  - Helped in evaluation planning and project management

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Example: Agreeing on Evaluation Objectives

Summary of key stakeholders' responses *(F = Funder, P = Program Manager)*

How much do you hope that the evaluation will…	N/A	It would be nice	It is important	It is essential	Rating of the objective's potential importance*
a) Support accountability for program performance and spending			P	F	High
b) Increase our understanding of the program	F	P			Low
c) Develop our staff's capacity for effective program design, assessment, and improvement		F	P		Medium

* High priority: both primary stakeholders categorized it as "important" or "essential" or if only one primary stakeholder categorized it as "essential."
Medium priority: one primary stakeholder categorized it as "important" and the other as "would be nice" or "would not want it."
Low priority: both primary stakeholders categorized an item as "would be nice" or "would not want it."

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Next Steps

- More pilot testing until the tools work smoothly
- Accumulate evidence of the value of Cathexis evaluations over time
- See if we can analyse the data
- Encourage others to try the tools out, to see if they work in different contexts
- Encourage others to try different approaches
- Long term: Refine them for wide-scale use?

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Q&A