

Session 2: Effective Communication of Evaluation Results and Learning

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- Biggest challenge for environmental evaluation is to produce evaluations that are actually used for learning or accountability
- Evaluation results are:
 - Empirical results & recommendations
 - theoretical results
 - evaluation methods
- Paradox: Need many evaluations to show that there is a problem before you can learn and then change/ but then for an evaluation to seem useful it must produce new results
- Communication strategies: dissemination (reporting and demonstration) and production (interactive)
- Production strategy: based on multi-stakeholder involvement and empowerment
- The framing of an evaluation affects its ability to be used for learning.
- Production strategies, which involve users in the entire evaluation process, are important for promoting learning
- Dissemination strategies are important to increase the possibilities of intended uses.

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11 communication formats (interactive session)

1. Newsletters - brochures, factsheets
 2. Video
 3. Posters
 4. working sessions
 5. memos & postcards
 6. verbal – testimonials, play
 7. email
 8. exec summary
 9. formal report
- To promote internal learning: who did we serve? How well were they served?
 - Communicating value in tough times:
 - needs vs solutions – to show value, talk about solutions more than needs
 - based on solid evaluation – not messaging and spin
 - show social or economic impact

Q&A and comments

Q: (to the audience) What are some roadblocks/ lessons learned:

A: important to define audience that communication is directed at (i.e. letters)

A. Taken lessons from a specific evaluation make more general and disseminate to other departments/ programs etc

A. Mass media wants one-liners/ simple stories. But this is not possible, it is necessary to also share the caveats.

Q: Do you use After Action reviews, which the Army uses, or a similar approach

A: Yes

C: Everyone wants to hear the good news, but you need to set up the culture in the organization to be prepared to accept results

C: Communication is inadequately budgeted so results can adequately be shared

Q: How would you get buy-in to proposed best management practices?

A: Ask up front what people need. If you set best practices/ a very high bar then often people can get discouraged

Q: How do you deal with a report with a large scope with results or main issues that do not span across the entire scope?

A: This is common, during the process you need to renegotiate with the customer to narrow and focus the scope.

C: if you are lucky to start evaluation at the start then you can address it during the process.