

Doing your Evaluation

Evaluation webinar handout

Introduction

- This handout relates to the 'doing your evaluation' webinar, and covers the following:
 - Qualitative and quantitative methods and how you can choose which kind of data you would like to collect.
 - The methods you can use to collect your data.
 - Evaluation designs and;
 - sampling methods.

What will I need to begin my evaluation?

- If you haven't already, set clear aims and objectives that you would like to achieve by delivering your intervention.
- Develop a logic model to plan how your intervention will achieve your aims and objectives.

Qualitative methods

- Qualitative evaluation focuses on quality. Methods that collect qualitative data should be used if you want to collect in-depth information during your evaluation.
- This kind of data tends to be collected from a small number of people, and therefore if you need a large number of people to take part in your evaluation project, it is unlikely that a qualitative method would be appropriate.

Quantitative methods

- Quantitative evaluation measures quantities, so you would select a method that collects quantitative data if you are looking to put a number on something.
- Although a quantitative method is more suitable to collect data from a larger number of people, there will still be a relatively small number of people taking part in your evaluation. This means you will need to ensure that enough people take part to produce meaningful results.

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What kind of data should I collect?

- Ideally you should collect both qualitative and quantitative data in your evaluation. However, if your resources do not allow for this, you are likely to want to focus more on one kind of data.
- To decide which kind of data to collect, there are a couple of factors to consider:
 - Think about the kind of evaluation you are carrying out; are you trying to improve your intervention, or prove that it is effective?
 - Consider time. Qualitative methods are more time-consuming for the respondent, and the data they produce is also more time-consuming for you to analyse.

What kind of data should I collect?

If you are hoping to improve the delivery of your intervention, collect qualitative data.

If you are hoping to prove the effectiveness of your intervention, collect quantitative data.

What methods can I use to collect data?

Interviews

- Interviews typically include an interviewer asking a number of open-ended questions so that the respondent can answer in detail.
- The interview will often be based on a number of key topic areas, and the interviewer can then probe for further information in response to the interviewee's answer.
- Interviews vary in terms of structure. Some interviews are semi-structured, meaning the interviewer will have a general idea of questions to be asked, but they can follow up responses with questions they had not planned to ask. There are also unstructured interviews, where questions are made up on the spot.
- In terms of practicality, interviews can be carried out in a number of ways, including face-to-face or by telephone.

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Focus groups

- Focus groups are a group of 4-12 people that are interviewed as a group.
- Those conducting a focus group will tend to use a guide with a general structure of open ended questions, which they ask to the group.
- For more information on interviews and focus groups, view the 'doing your interviews/focus groups' webinar and handout.

Observation

- Observation is a method that can be used to assess the delivery of an intervention.
- This can be done in a number of ways. An observation could involve a member of an evaluation team taking part in the intervention and taking notes or it could involve the intervention being filmed.
- Observation can be carried out overtly (with people's knowledge) or covertly, without telling participants about the presence of the observer or filming.
- There are ethical implications of covert observation, as those taking part in the intervention are unaware of the presence of an observer, and therefore have not given their informed consent.

Analysing existing documents

- Document analysis is a critical analysis of documentation. Documents could include reports on interventions, minutes of meetings, mission statements and training materials.

Questionnaires

- Questionnaires tend to consist of closed ended questions. To answer these questions, respondents tick an answer from a pre-defined list of answer options. However, questionnaires can also include some open ended questions with free text boxes for responses.
- Questionnaires are usually self-completed, either online or on paper. However, some questionnaires are interviewer led, and can be completed either face-to-face or over the phone.
- For more information on questionnaires, view the 'surveys and question writing' webinar and handout.

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Before data

- Once you have chosen a method to evaluate your intervention, it is worth thinking about collecting some before data, also known as baseline data.
- You can collect baseline data for interventions that are already running, by contacting respondents before the next delivery of your intervention. This would include asking them a number of questions before the intervention, and asking them the same questions after the intervention has been delivered, to determine whether there has been a knowledge, attitude or behaviour change.
- If you cannot contact respondents before you deliver your intervention, you could use a comparison group instead. A comparison group is a group of individuals similar to your respondents who will not attend your intervention. You can use the comparison group data as before data because they have not received the intervention.

Evaluation designs

- You will also need to select an evaluation design. An evaluation design will provide structure to your evaluation, setting out at what time points the evaluation will be conducted, and who with.

Experiments

- Experiments are the strongest evaluation design, but are also the most time consuming and expensive. For this reason, you are likely to need help from an external evaluator to carry out an evaluation of this type.
- There are two groups:
 - **Intervention group**- the group exposed to the intervention.
 - **Control group**- similar characteristics to the intervention group, but not exposed to the intervention.
- Participants are randomly allocated into these groups.

Quasi experiments

- Quasi-experiments are a good compromise between experiments and non-experiments.
- Like experiments, one group receives the intervention, and one group does not. However, people are not randomly allocated to groups as they are in an experiment. For this reason, the group who are not exposed to the intervention are known as the comparison group.

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Non-experiments

- Non-experiments are the least time consuming and expensive, but they are also the least robust evaluation design, meaning it is difficult to say whether any change in attitudes, knowledge or behaviour is a result of your road safety intervention.
- Non-experiments are different to the other evaluation designs because they do not include a control or comparison group.

Sampling

- There are lots of ways to select a sample to take part in your evaluation. However, it is advisable that you select the best sampling method you can within your budget to collect more reliable data.

How many people should take part?

Chosen data collection method	How many people should take part?
Survey/Questionnaire	At least 50 people
Focus group	4-12 people (per focus group)

- You could also use a sample size calculator such as: <http://www.raosoft.com/samplesize.html>

Sampling methods

- **Random sampling-** is any method where each individual in your target population has an equal chance of being selected to take part in your evaluation.
- **Non-random sampling methods-** it can be very difficult to collect a random sampling method. For this reason, you might like to select a non-random sampling method. A non-random sampling method is a sampling method where each individual in the target population does NOT have an equal chance of being selected. An example of this is purposive sampling, where only people with particular characteristics are selected e.g. those who have penalty points on their driving licence for speeding.
- **Weaker sampling methods-** there are also a number of weaker sampling methods you can use, if you do not have the resources to collect your sample using a stronger sampling method.
- For more information on how to select a sample, visit our [website](#).

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Summary

- This handout has covered:
 - Quantitative and qualitative methods.
 - Methods you can use to collect data.
 - Evaluation designs.
 - Sampling methods.

Contact details

If you have any further questions about the evaluation process, please email: rneedham@rospa.com