

InterAction Webinar 2012: Impact Evaluation

Guidance Note 4 Use of Impact Evaluation Results

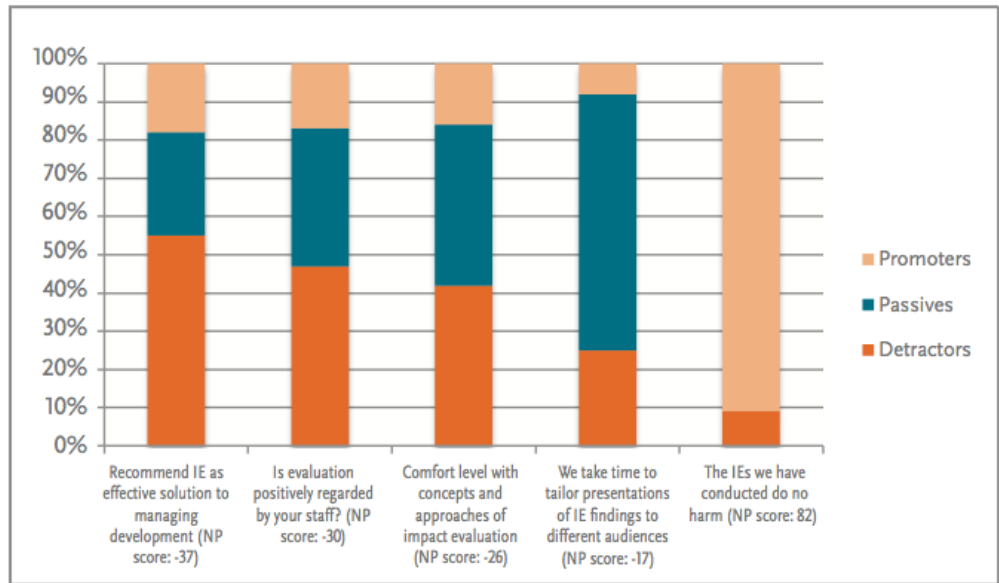
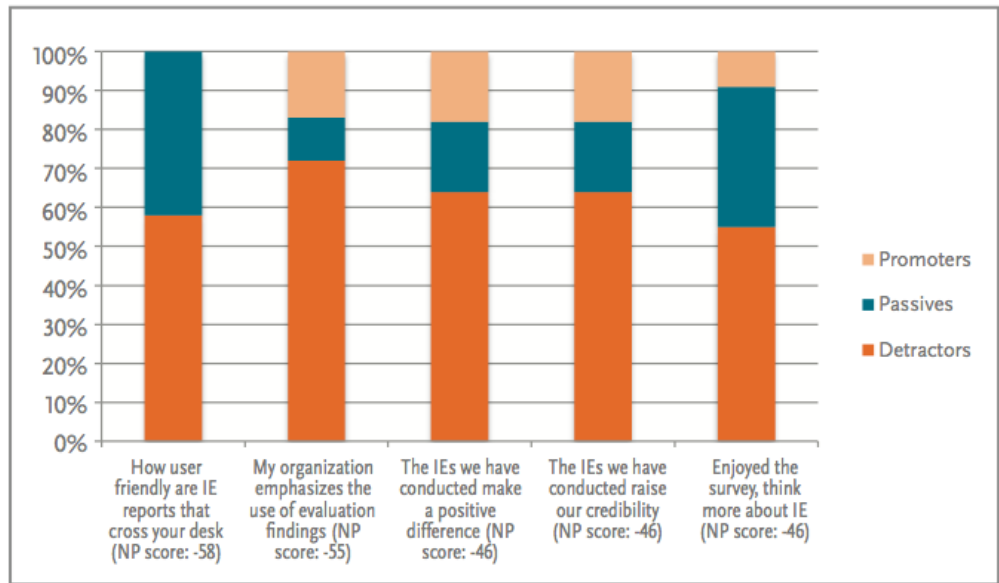
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Introduction

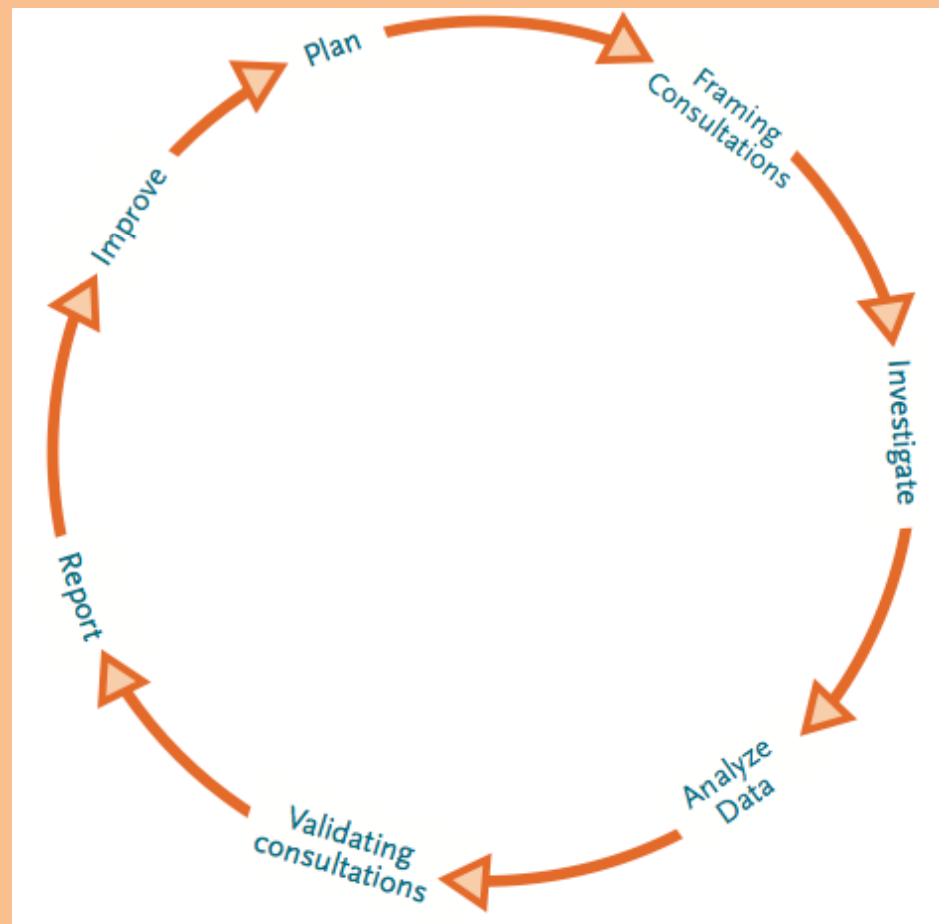
- Inductive approach: Online survey and follow-up interviews
- Main findings:
 - General dissatisfaction with current practices
 - Constraints to use include:
 - Lack of clarity over purposes and value
 - Lack of know how and systems to do (and use) IE
 - Lack of donor support for IE
 - Worry over negative IE findings

Figure 1. Attitudes towards impact evaluation organized into promoters, passives and detractors



Theme 1: User prep

- Who are the intended users?
 - Map the possible uses across different stakeholders



Craft of knowledge transfer

- **True Not New:** Knowledge products often succeed when they put a new twist on beliefs and messages that people already hold to be true.
- **Head and Heart:** A successful knowledge product transfers information so that it resonates with both the head (thoughts) and the heart (feelings).
- **It Takes Two:** A successful knowledge product has to “get it right,” both with the knowledge being transferred and the quality of the product.
- **Right on Time:** Successful knowledge transfer depends on the timing of delivery.
- **A New View:** Never underestimate the power of the unexpected to blow open the doors of human discovery.
- **Set the Hook:** For a knowledge product to build understanding, it must do more than attract attention. It must embed itself in an issue the end user cares about.
- **How, Then What:** The way knowledge products are distributed is as important as what the knowledge products intends to convey.
- **One Bite at a Time:** To convey complex knowledge, you must break content into manageable “bites” and arrange them logically for the end user.
- **Look Who’s Talking:** An authentic voice will build credibility for a knowledge product in ways that nothing else can.
- **Calm Down:** Using new knowledge to ease chronic anxiety is one of the most powerful ways to penetrate the public consciousness.
- **Join the Club:** Creating a membership aura around a knowledge product can foster a strong sense of cohesion and group identity.
- **Beyond Words:** Simple visual images, when well-designed, can convert knowledge to understanding without dependence on text or language.

Theme 2: “Its your OS, stupid”

- Constraints:
 - IE bring cross-organisation pressures (more complex in large decentralised organisations)
 - Staff burden
- Recommendations:
 - Incorporate findings into management meetings
 - Practical solutions – see MCC report

An Operational Checklist for Using Evaluation

Planning & management

1. Develop a value proposition for each potential user.
2. Estimate what evidence will be useful for what user at what time.
3. Recruit a team from across all organization units that will be required to ensure that identified user needs are met.
4. Whenever possible, make full use of existing research data so as to reduce the staff burden of original data collection.
5. Build a communications strategy for evaluations that differentiates internal and external communications and includes user-appropriate reporting formats.
6. Map existing systems and activities for opportunities to tease in small steps for evaluation use.
7. Routinely include discussions of evaluation findings in staff meetings.
8. Track awareness and use through an evaluation scorecard that aggregates up to higher-level organization scorecards. Indicators should include timeliness and quality of staff inputs as well as resulting actions.

User engagement & measuring evaluation use and impact

9. Before the evaluation begins, engage users to test the evaluation hypotheses and proposed indicators, and to determine when and how to best report the findings.
10. Validate tentative findings and deepen interpretations through consultations with users.
11. Conduct assessments one month after the evaluation has been reported to learn where and how the findings of the evaluation are known (awareness) and used.
12. Conduct assessments six months after the evaluation has been reported to learn how the evaluation may have changed users' beliefs and behaviors.

Theme 3: Incentives, incentives, incentives

- Lack of “survival anxiety”
- But positive developments:
 - Growing climate of accountability
 - Trend towards greater professional management and underlying evidence
 - Internet-powered accountability
 - Pay for success
 - Rating organizations starting to focus on results

Cultivating a learning culture

- Leadership buy-in
- Analyze your current learning culture
- Create formal space for learning
- Reward learning achievements
- Accountability for learning in performance appraisal

Taking evaluation use seriously...

Benchmarking use metrics:

1. Recruit an initial group of at least 10 organizations
2. Agree fees and rules of engagement based on confidentiality, transparency and inclusion
3. Agree a set of indicators of evaluation use to be tracked and reported by all participants.
4. Participants track and report on agreed measures
5. Measures are analyzed and reported
6. Participants interpret the data and exchange experiences.