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TIP SHEET #14



Evaluating Your Rodeo Project

Good evaluations can assist you with needs and assets assessments that can help you identify community concerns about tobacco sponsorship and resources to address the issues.

- Program evaluation is an important part of any project.**¹ Good evaluations can:
- assist you with needs and assets assessments that can help you identify community concerns about tobacco sponsorship and resources to address the issues;
 - provide stakeholders, such as anti-tobacco advocates and local merchants, with information about your project activities;
 - identify specific project activities that are working or not working;
 - help you systematically gather information on project activities and outcomes that you can use for seeking future funding;
 - provide your funding agency with documented evidence of your progress and accomplishments; and
 - above all, a good evaluation tells a story that can help others learn from your experience.

Below are some tips for incorporating evaluation into your rodeo project.

1. The evaluation of your rodeo project should begin with an evaluation plan that includes:

- reviewing your goals and objectives, in order to focus the evaluation activities;
- identifying resources needed for evaluation (e.g., staff time, survey design expertise, computer software, etc.);
- developing evaluation questions, such as “What are the attitudes of rodeo attendees in our community towards spit tobacco sponsorship?” that will help you focus your evaluation time and resources; and
- creating a timeline for conducting evaluation activities.

2. Your evaluation should include both process and outcome evaluation measures:

- **Process evaluation** assesses your program activities and describes how effectively you implemented your strategies. For example, you could document the methods you used to get people to sign a petition during a rodeo event to eliminate tobacco sponsorship of the rodeo, or how you overcame barriers to meeting with the rodeo officials.
- **Outcome evaluation** assesses whether or not you achieved your desired outcome/change (e.g., got the local rodeo to sign a no-tobacco sponsorship policy) and the key actions and decisions that helped you achieve your outcome.

3. Good evaluation can help you produce a case study of your rodeo project that can be shared with your funding agency, stakeholders, and other communities who wish to eliminate tobacco sponsorship. A good case study has the following characteristics:

- **Answers questions** such as: “What happened?” “Who was involved?” “What did they do?” and “Why did they do it?”
- **Utilizes qualitative information** (e.g., interviews) that is often supported by quantitative data (e.g., scaled surveys). For example, a 1 to 5 scaled-response survey of 100 rodeo attendees about their attitudes towards spit tobacco may find that 75% rated spit tobacco as “very harmful.” This rate can support interview comments made by people such as “My cousin chewed tobacco and died of mouth cancer, and I don’t want

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to see it harm other people.” In effect, qualitative information helps you tell your story in the real words of the people involved.

4. Good evaluation requires the development of relevant **data collection** instruments to help you collect and clearly document your process and outcome evaluation information and answer your evaluation questions.² The instruments may include:
- **Intercept survey interviews** of rodeo attendees and participants to gather information on attitudes towards tobacco sponsorship.
 - **Bar observation survey** to note tobacco industry sponsored bar events taking place before or after a rodeo event.
 - **Rodeo event observation survey** to note the presence of tobacco industry activity such as a spit tobacco sampling tent, banners, program ads, PA announcements, and sponsor flags, as well as to assess Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) and Smokeless Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (STMSA) compliance.
 - **Key informant interviews** to assess attitudes towards tobacco sponsorship of the rodeo. Key informants could be local elected officials, influential business people, rodeo competitors, members of the religious community, and youth-oriented organizations.

5. Analyzing your data:

- Analyzing interviews and written documents in particular (e.g., meeting minutes) requires an eye for identifying themes that explain what transpired between the beginning of your project and the end. For example, you may find from reviewing board meeting minutes that from the beginning of your project, the rodeo organizers were willing to drop tobacco sponsorship if they could find alternative sponsors. Additional review of your project’s minutes may also show that assisting in the search for alternative sponsorship was one of your top three strategies for getting policy adoption.
- Try to find the connection between your project’s activities (e.g., media advocacy) and the outcome. For example, you may find from interviews that a major media event that you conducted to attract public attention to tobacco sponsorship was an important reason why the rodeo board finally adopted a no-tobacco sponsorship policy.

6. If you have funds to hire an **outside evaluator**, keep the following in mind:

- Seek out an evaluator who understands and has experience with tobacco control issues. Ask your local tobacco project for names of evaluators.
- The evaluator should be a part of your program *early on*, ideally when you are developing your grant proposal and no later than when funding begins.
- Clearly define the evaluator’s role. Will they attend staff meetings? Will they not only design the data collection instruments but also collect the data? Will they do the data entry and analysis or will project staff do this? Will they write progress reports to the funding agency or will the project manager do this?
- Meet with your evaluator at least once a month to keep abreast of evaluation activities. This helps the project manager ensure that the project activities are in sync with the evaluation activities.
- Keep good records of your program activities including minutes of meetings, email communications, media activities, etc., and share them with your evaluator. These records and documents serve as the bases for high-quality process evaluation.
- Work collaboratively with your evaluator to produce a final evaluation report.

¹ See Resources Tip Sheet for additional evaluation resource information.

² Sample survey instruments regarding tobacco sponsorship are available by contacting the Project SMART (Sponsorship Mission: Avoid Reliance on Tobacco) Money Workgroup at the California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section, at (916) 449-5500.