Use and User Focused Conference Evaluation: Collaboration, Negotiation, and Action
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PLANNING

Background
The Hawaii-Pacific Evaluation Association (H-PEA) hosted its inaugural conference, “Evaluation Exchange,” in September, 2006. Six graduate students from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa were entrusted by the H-PEA conference organizing committee to design a conference evaluation that provides information for future conference decision making. The poster describes the process and the accomplishment of the utilization-focused approach taken in the evaluation of the 2006 H-PEA Annual Conference.

USE & User Focused Evaluation Approach
- Consider available time and resources
- Take action based on evaluation findings
- Keep records of observations and outcomes
- Evaluation responds to primary intended users

Use & User Focused Evaluation Approach
- Purpose of evaluation:
  - Summative: Judge success/feasibility
  - Modeling: Demonstrate conf. eval practice
- Primary intended users:
  - Newly elected HPEA officers
- Uses of evaluation:
  - Plan 2007 conference based on participants’ feedback needs.
- Post the conference evaluation report on the H-PEA webpage to demonstrate conference evaluation and to inform future participants about the conference.

PROCESS & IMPLEMENTATION

1. Prioritization
- Step 1: Gathered contextual information & example evaluation forms and reports.
- Reviewed H-PEA conference program and logistics
- Reviewed example evaluation forms and reports to generate common categories
- Step 2: Created a prioritization survey (specified format & focus)
- Major categories common across conference surveys:
  - Attendee feedback
  - Conference program
  - Conference outcomes
  - Overall impression & value
  - Future planning
- Scale formats: 4pt or 5pt, bar scale or box-style scale
- Step 3: Presented prioritization survey results to the conference planning committee (see results below).

2. Development (iterative process)
- Step 1: Designed the first draft of the conference evaluation form based on the prioritization survey.
- Step 2: Gathered feedback on the format and question types.
- Internal eval committee’s feedback
- User feedback through:
  - Email
  - Meeting: Constructive & individual feedback
- Step 3: Incorporated feedback to a second draft. Gathered feedback from the users.
- Meeting:
  - Reported user feedback to the evaluation committee
- Step 4: Third draft and review from the Chair of the H-PEA conference.
- Step 5: Final draft

3. Implementation
- Strategies taken to obtain high return rate (68%):
  - Use distinct colored forms and reports to generate high return rate.
  - Dedicated personnel for collecting the eval form at the conference room entrance.
  - Announce the value of evaluation form.
  - Constantly remind participants to return the form.
- Timing of collection

4. Data Analysis
- Quantitative data:
  - Descriptive statistics
  - Frequency report
  - Bar graphs and tables
- Qualitative data:
  - Thematic analysis and use of representative quotes

5. Reporting Results
- Format: Oral and written report
- Audience:
  - Oral: Newly elected and former officers.
  - Written: Anyone interested in the organization has access on the web.
- Purpose:
  - Oral: Written: To inform planning of future conference.
  - To judge the effectiveness of the conference.
- Written: To demonstrate good conference evaluation practice.
- Oral: To facilitate discussion for future planning.
- Content:
  - Short summary of the conference.
  - Results of the conference evaluation.
  - Strategy suggestions
- Timing:
  - Draft of written report
  - 3 weeks after the conference for the H-PEA officer’s meeting.
  - Final written report
  - 1 month after the conference.
  - Oral report
  - 1.5 month later

6. Use of the Evaluation Results
- Broadened channels of communications and publicity of the conference.
- More representation from education sector to accommodate the majority (+50%) audience.
- More panel speakers from education.
- Take people’s suggestions for panel topics into account.
- More opportunities for professional development.
- Add workshop component and more methodology content in the conference.
- Shorter business meetings.
- Mindful about keeping time for the panel sessions.
- More focused round-table activity.

Example instruments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Results of the Prioritization Survey</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( ) indicates the mean score on a 4 pt scale</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Why did you attend the H-PEA conference?</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Area of interest (discipline)</td>
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<td>(3) Evaluation experience</td>
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<td>(4) Where they traveled from (e.g., traveled from…</td>
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<tr>
<td>(5) Conference organization</td>
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<td>(6) Program (e.g., Adequate choice in programming, scheduling)</td>
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<td>(7) Pre-conference information</td>
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<td>(8) Arrangement</td>
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<tr>
<td>(9) Registration and review process</td>
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<td>(10) Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>(11) Feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12) Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13) Conference Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14) Each component of the program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15) Allocation of time</td>
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<tr>
<td>(16) Overall satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>(17) Professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18) Facilitation of knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>(19) Other evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>(20) Value (e.g., &quot;I feel my attendance was worthwhile.&quot;)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(21) Cost effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(22) Future planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>(23) Future topics and activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(24) Improvement (e.g., What did you like about this year’s event?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(25) Scheduling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| (26) Any other aspects/components of the conference you would like to know for future conference?

Use & User Focused Evaluation Approach