

**Sydney:**

Suite 108 272 Victoria Avenue Chatswood NSW 2067  
Mail: PO Box 1675 Chatswood NSW 2057  
Phone: +61 (0)2 9413 1233  
Mobile: +61 (0)414 504 832  
Email: leswinton@bigpond.com  
Internet: artcraft.com.au

**Canberra:**

Suite 17 Level 1 Manuka Arcade  
20 Franklin St Manuka ACT 2603  
Phone: +61 (0)2 6232 6264



Communications, Marketing and Social Research Consultants

# PROGRAM EVALUATION

## The Role for Research-Based Evaluation.



**September 2005**

## **EVALUATION IS GROWING:**

There is clear evidence that the need for independent program evaluations is growing rapidly in Australia and the world, largely in response to calls for greater accountability in the spending of public money, subsidies and grants.

Frequently asked questions include:

“Are the programs run by your department as effective as they could be?”

“What are you doing to improve or terminate ineffective programs?”

“What new programs need to be developed to better meet the needs and problems of your target audiences?”

“We have supported your organisation for the past ten years, but now we need evidence that it is worth continuing that support.”

“How do we find out if our programs are working as well as they should be?”

## **WHY EVALUATE?**

In helping to provide answers to these questions, the main purposes of evaluation are:

- to help initially in developing and setting clear and measurable program objectives
- to see later whether a program is achieving its stated objectives,
- to identify its strengths and how they might be capitalized upon,
- to identify its weaknesses and how they might be addressed and overcome,
- to provide information and evidence for improving, continuing, expanding or terminating a program.

For an evaluation to be seen to be credible, objective and professionally detached, it is important to commission an independent evaluation team with sound research and evaluation methodologies and experience.

## **WHAT IS EVALUATION?**

There are many different definitions of evaluation. The definition we still prefer is one proposed by Case, Andrews and Werner<sup>1</sup> in 1988. In their view, “to evaluate is to

---

<sup>1</sup> Case R, Andrews, M and Werner, W. (1988). How can we do it? An evaluation training package for development educators. British Columbia, Canada: Research and Development in Global Studies.

make an explicit judgement about the worth of all or part of a program by collecting evidence to determine if acceptable standards have been met”.

They go on to describe ‘standards’ as ideals or desired qualities or conditions against which actual objectives are to be measured, and ‘evidence’ as information necessary to help us confirm whether or not the required standards have been met by the program.

### **TYPES OF EVALUATION:**

There are basically two kinds of evaluations:

- a. Process (Formative) Evaluation, used for generating information to assist with program development, improvement, modification and management.
- b. Impact (Summative) Evaluation, used for determining program results and effectiveness (merit and worth), in order to inform major decisions about the continuation, expansion, reduction, and funding of a program.

### **TIMING OF EVALUATION:**

Where in the life of a program should we conduct an evaluation? In an ideal world, the answer is that evaluations should be carried out before, during and after every program. In the real world, a choice usually has to be made between the following:

- a. Program design stage evaluation – effectively a needs assessment where the information gathered is used to determine program content and set the program goals.
- b. Program start-up evaluation – conducted at the commencement of the program to establish a baseline or benchmark against which progress of the program on a number of indicators can be judged (eg, improvements in participants’ behaviour, positive impact on the community, etc)
- c. In-progress or formative evaluation – which is conducted during the planning and implementation of a program to help make immediate changes or adjustments in the program and to prepare for summative evaluation. It looks for the strengths and weaknesses in a program while it is still going on, and contributes to its improvement.
- d. Program wrap-up or summative evaluation – which takes place at the end of a program, or at major planned landmarks or turning points in a long-term program. This is mainly for program accountability purposes, but the ‘lessons learnt’ can also be used to inform better design of future programs.
- e. Follow-up evaluation – which is usually conducted some time after participants have finished their involvement with the program, and looks to measure the longer term benefits of a program.

## **DESIGNING PROGRAMS FOR EVALUATION:**

- a. Can the program be evaluated? – does it have clear objectives and well-defined activities or processes? are there clearly defined standards and indicators? (This is why we should be involved from the outset.)
- b. What information is needed for your evaluation? – who needs it? what level of evidence do they require?
- c. How do we obtain the information? – what method (or a combination of methods) is appropriate?

## **THE ARTCRAFT PRACTITIONERS:**

**Les Winton** *BA DipEd, MA (MktgComs), FAICD, FAIM, FAMI (CPM), MAMSRS (QPMR)*

Les is Managing Director and owner of Artcraft Research, and has been a market researcher for 34 years. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in the Social Sciences, a Diploma of Education, and a Master of Arts in Marketing Communications.

After working in marketing positions with a Swedish steel company in Australia (1962-66), Les was called up for National Service, serving in Australia and South Vietnam (1966-68). He then completed his initial university studies (1969-73) and embarked upon a career in market research and marketing with ANOP (1971-83), before starting his own consultancy Artcraft Studios (Artcraft Research, Artcraft Marketing and Artcraft Training) in 1983.

Les is a Member of the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS), through which he has Qualified Practising Market Researcher status (QPMR), the Australasian Evaluation Society (AES) and the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). He is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD), the Australian Institute of Management (AIM), and the Australian Marketing Institute (AMI) through which he has Certified Practising Marketer status (CPM).

### **Laurie West**

Laurie is Operations Manager of Artcraft Research, and Manager of our Queensland Operations. He worked for thirteen years with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1969-81), on a range of economical, social and population surveys. His principal interest and experience was in the Population Surveys area, ultimately managing the field operations of the NSW office.

Laurie set up his own consultancy in 1981, providing expertise in survey development, field services and field management expertise on a wide range of large surveys for government and industry. Over the years, Laurie has worked with Artcraft Research on many projects where his skills in project management, specialised field services, and attention to detail can be fully utilised.

### **Marie Pears**

Marie is a Research Officer at Artcraft Research. Before joining Artcraft Research, Marie spent many years in the health and education sectors, and has developed expertise in the sourcing and assembling of secondary data and the building and accessing of databases. Marie's role also includes analysis of qualitative data from focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and community consultations.

## **Robyn Kunko**

Robyn works with Artcraft Research as our National Field Consultant Manager, and has 25 years of experience in market and social research. She assembled and manages an IQCA-accredited team of highly professional interviewers and recruitment personnel trained to her exacting standards, who have worked on many Artcraft Research assignments for more than two decades. Robyn is a member of the Australian Market and Social Research Society (AMSRS, formerly the Market Research Society of Australia, MRSA) and is a past chairperson and treasurer of its Field Management Group in SA.