

Now it's built, will they come? Learnings from Evaluating Reach

AEA Evaluation 2017 Conference: Evaluation – From Learning to Action

November 10, 2017

This document began as a summary of key discussion points from a roundtable on evaluating reach at the AEA evaluation conference in November 2017.

Which Reach evaluation questions are used most often and why?

- As per the session handout¹ – how many are participating, who they are, access barriers, etc.
- As well:
 - o Who is not coming (but is eligible)?
 - o Are these participants unique/duplicates?
 - o Are they new/repeat participants?

How easy/challenging/useful are different metrics or methods?

- As per the session handout² – much of the data was from administrative databases or participant surveys – also program documents, stakeholder interviews or analytics
- Data from tracking uptake of promotions – may be reliable data for each promotion but it can be difficult to translate this into reach across promotions
 - o May also have an awareness measure e.g., heard about it through alumni at events – but not be able to break it out by different events (to determine which events, or alumni, may have encouraged participation more)
- Data from applications – lots of data, lots of noise, how to find the people?
 - o Using action analytics – clicks, shares etc. is better as people are taking these actions
 - o Log file analysis – downloaded info on 10 people and did an analysis on how they were participating (some were “hummingbirds” and some were more focused but visiting in more depth)
- Use segmentation – to look at the overall target population (e.g., the general public) and then segments of target groups (e.g., disadvantaged/underserved groups, professionals)
 - o professionals – are harder to get in the door and are used to incentives
- When organizations rather than individuals are participants – may evaluate “engagement” as participation

¹ <http://www.atrimonta.com/evaluating-reach.html>

² <http://www.atrimonta.com/evaluating-reach.html>

- Surveying – what works
 - o Survey once a year – very short, let them know how long and how many (only once a year) – we achieve response rates of 50%-55% with researchers this way
 - o Survey response rates can be up to 100% if in person – hand them out and get them back e.g., at the end of training workshops
 - o Real time at events can work well – participants like the interactivity when they see the responses right away
 - o The challenge is how to be streamlined and ask without overburdening
- External approvals e.g., IRB, OMB – issues are the process and the time required to fulfill the requirements
 - o What works - is an overarching approach/agreement and consistency in requests
 - o Need to ensure consent is truly informed
- Be clear in the evaluation about why/what metrics you need - and link this back to the evaluation matrix and the program’s goals

How relevant/similar are themes in the findings?

- What works is:
 - o Using multiple channels
 - o Webinars – can be good as they get people in the door who then continue to participate
 - o Champions – have influence/can encourage participation
 - o Referrals – may be fewer in quantity but have high impact in terms of encouraging participation
 - o Events – can encourage participation, though it can be challenging to break out impacts of individual events (vis a vis events as a category)
- Sub-populations can differ:
 - o Younger participants are a better fit with online incl. social media channels and older participants more through webinars and in-person relationship channels
 - o Website users – can be of different types e.g., hummingbirds and in-depth visitors

Evaluating session reach

How did you become aware of this session?

- Conference program (incl. app)

What prompted you to come to this session?

- Working on an evaluation(s) which cover reach a lot and/or have reach challenges
- Came with someone else

How easy/difficult was it to access this session?

- Easy – was in the program
- Difficult - finding the room, choosing between so many sessions (in the same timeslot)