

Evaluating Main Street Promotions

Implementing an event is only half the battle in a successful promotion. After the event has occurred, a thorough evaluation will help you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your event. Armed with this information, you can then improve the event or other similar events in the future. Benefits of evaluating events and measuring results include:

- Credibility for the organization:
 - with event sponsors
 - with event participants
 - with district businesses
 - with the public in general
- Identification of current and future target markets

The evaluation should measure:

- Attendance: who and how many?
- Volunteer, participant, and businesses attitudes: how did they feel about the image created for the district/event? Did they feel the event generated sufficient recognition and awareness for the district? How well did the logistics of the event work? What needs to be improved?
- Sales volume (if retail sales was a component of the event).
- Media value for sponsors: did sponsors receive sufficient coverage?

Ways to measure attendance:

- Pedestrian counts: count at random locations and different times.
- Parking volume: calculate number of cars and approximate number of people per car.
- Photos: can instantly document crowd levels for later counting.
- Exit surveys: as people are leaving, survey them for residence, demographic information, reason for attending, and length of attendance.
- Coupons: if used, coupons can give a good indication of number of participants.

Ways to measure attitudes:

- Surveys: volunteers, businesses, and attendees can be surveyed regarding their opinions of the event.
- Committee evaluation: the committee implementing the event should provide evaluation forms for volunteers, entertainers, vendors, sponsors, government officials, and businesses to get feedback on the event

- Evaluation of logistics: discuss problems and strengths. Discuss ways to fine-tune in the future.
- Overall evaluation: did the event meet its objectives? Do you want to implement it again?

Ways to measure sales volume:

- Survey selected merchants. It's helpful if they're able to compare sales during the event with sales on a normal day.
- Survey food, beverage, and product vendors.
- Conduct exit surveys at parking and transportation areas. Ask people if they purchased, how much, and why or why not.

Ways to measure value for sponsors:

- Evaluate the cost and value of their sponsorship based on number of people, types of people, and their estimated buying power.
- Gauge product/sponsor awareness by conducting exit surveys of participants and measuring on-site product sales.
- Prepare a final report for sponsors including attendance numbers, demographic profile, assessment of value, photographs that show their visibility.