



“... and for the CEO, a cartoon”: Practical strategies for communicating findings to busy audiences

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Overview

- Understanding the information needs of managers in business and industry
- Problems with the “Rorschach Inkblot” approach to presenting data
- Some options for presenting findings
 - Being explicit about quality/value and importance
 - The importance-weighted “snapshot”
 - Composite stories for qualitative data
 - Color coded graphical representations for quantitative data



Managers' information needs

- Business & industry clients generally have:
 - Little statistical, research, or evaluation expertise
 - A preference for numbers over qualitative data (but like qualitative if they also have numbers)
 - Very little time or inclination to read reports
 - An incentive to interpret results favorably

- Managers
 - Are either "readers" or "listeners"
 - Only like to wade through the details if they have been given "the scoop" first (with some exceptions)

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The Rorschach Inkblot Approach

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ How it works:<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Present results■ Provide some interpretation■ Leave it up to the client to determine how well the evaluand is doing overall | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The reaction:<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ "Do I have to read all this?"■ "Which part should I read?"■ "What's the bottom line?"■ "So ... should we keep investing in this or not?" |
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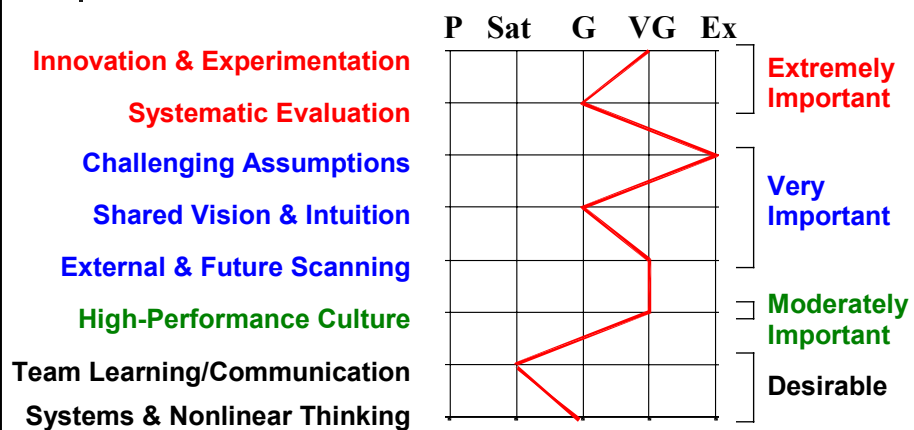
Good evaluations need to provide

- Clear interpretations of the value of results to the organization and their relative importance (for mixed results)
- Information about cost-effectiveness relative to alternatives
- Dramatically condensed summary information
- Data presented in a way that makes it easy to take in quickly and accurately

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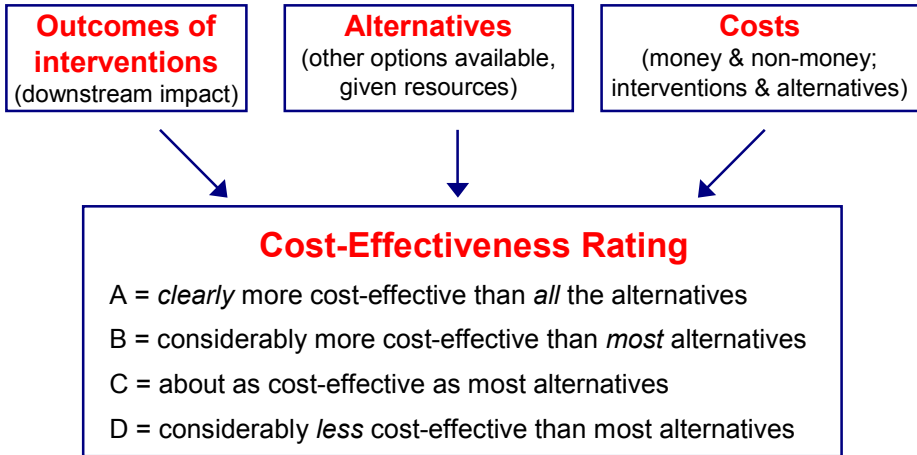


The Importance-Weighted 'Snapshot'



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Rating evaluands on cost-effectiveness



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A cost-effectiveness profile

0 = the least cost-effective of all options

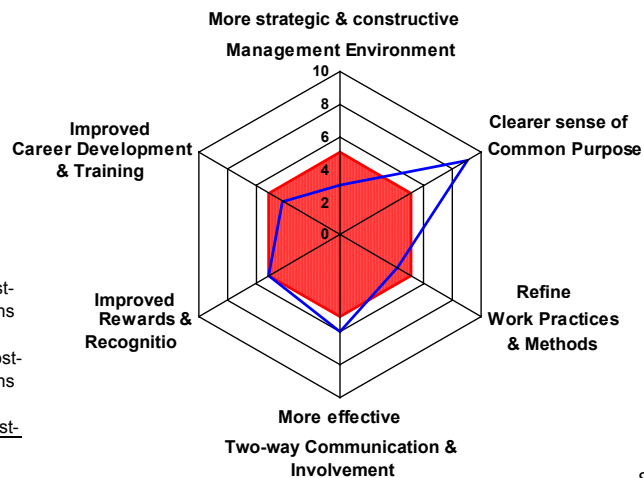
2 = considerably less cost-effective than most options

4 = marginally less cost-effective than most options

6 = marginally more cost-effective than most options

8 = considerably more cost-effective than most options

10 = clearly the most cost-effective alternative



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Composite stories for qualitative data

- How it works
 - Identify subgroups that have had similar experiences with an organizational intervention
 - For each subgroup, identify 3-4 individuals whose experience is "typical"/representative
 - Construct a "composite story" for each subgroup that incorporates the experiences of several people
- Advantages:
 - A strategy for capturing what organizational interventions are like from the inside
 - Maintains confidentiality (if done carefully)

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Representing change in quant data

