

**WELCOA's 7 Benchmarks**  
Benchmark #7: Carefully Evaluating Outcomes

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# Communicating Your Evaluation Results

How To Make Your Findings Stick

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By David Hunnicutt, PhD



WELCOA (The Wellness Council of America) is one of the nation's most-respected resources for building high-performing, healthy workplaces. Over its 25+ year history, WELCOA has perfected its patented Well Workplace protocol which is the key to developing, delivering, and sustaining a healthy corporate culture. Whether you are a workplace wellness practitioner, human resources professional, business leader, or consultant/broker, WELCOA's tools, trainings, and resources will help you better promote organizational well-being and, at the same time, contain escalating health care costs.

### **THE MISSION**

Transforming organizations into high-performing cultures by improving the health and well-being of their employees.

### **FAST FACTS**

- » WELCOA was founded 30 years ago as a resource for building and sustaining results-oriented workplace wellness programs.
- » The WELCOA Nation is the largest network of health promotion professionals in the world made up of over 5,000 Member organizations, 30,000 subscribers and followers, and millions of employees around the globe.
- » More than 1,000 organizations have achieved WELCOA's Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum or Small Business Well Workplace Award status.
- » WELCOA has certified over 1,500 health promotion professionals in all 50 states and 5 countries.

## WELCOA's 7 Benchmarks

# Benchmark #7: Carefully Evaluating Outcomes



# Communicating Your Evaluation Results

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### Introduction

These days everybody talks about the “stickiness” factor. Without going too deep, “stickiness” is the notion of getting your information noticed—especially in a world where there’s already way too much information floating around as it is. In this article, we’ll put forth some useful tips to help you get the most out of your evaluation results.

### Sticky Tip #1: Keep It Simple

This is gospel when it comes to making information sticky. Plain and simple, people are not attracted to things they can’t understand—and that means if people can’t figure out your evaluation results, you are pretty much dead in the water. If you want to get the most out of your evaluation findings, make sure that the information is accurate AND concise AND easy-to-understand. Your reports should be brief. Your PowerPoint presentations should be straightforward. Your graphs should be simple and easy-to-understand. Your discussions need to be frank and to the point. Avoid “lengthy” like the plague—keep things simple.

But what if people want to dig deeper? That’s when you give them the working papers behind the report. Logistically, it’s an easy thing to do. Simply gather all of the background

documents—aggregate reports, data analyses, etc. and place them in a three-ring binder. Simple stuff. But remember to make sure you remember who you loan the working papers to—it’s a pain to have to reformat this information a second time.

### Sticky Tip #2: Use Pictures

It’s been said that a picture is worth a thousand words—and when it comes to stickiness, it’s absolutely true. Pictures have a powerful and pleasing effect on the brain—instinctively, we all know this is true. If you doubt this tip, simply think back to the last time you sat through a presentation with PowerPoint slides filled with to the brim with text and numbers. Boring, boring, BORING—and definitely not sticky. So, if you want your message to stick, use pictures and images.

But before moving on, it’s important to advise you that the images that you use should be relevant and consistent with the topic. For example, I recently sat through a presentation where the presenter shared the case study and outcomes of his worksite wellness program and he used “the journey” as his metaphor. By incorporating beautiful images of different aspects of a journey, his point was very well-received by everyone in attendance.

## Sticky Tip #3: Tell Stories

Stories entertain. Stories captivate. Stories get passed on. Tell stories. This is a big, big advantage in making your message stick. For example, imagine the practitioner who talks to her senior management about how her programs reduced cholesterol by 30% among program participants. Then she goes onto to explain the powerful effect that this reduction can have physiologically on the human anatomy—good stuff, but it could be a whole lot better.

Now imagine the same practitioner actually uses one of the program's participants as a testimonial. She proudly shares that without this kind of intervention, the individual may have been severely compromised or even disabled in the future—and the devastating impact that could have had on their family. And then after telling this heartwarming story, she actually brings the individual into the room and allows the person to add some color commentary.

The bottom line is this: stories stick. Use them—a lot.

## Sticky Tip #4: Never Have More Than One Main Point

When you present your evaluation data, you have to keep it to ONE major point and/or conclusion. Why is this important? Because people can remember one thing—maybe two—but they can't (and won't) remember 10 major points. Make no mistake about it: distilling your findings down into one major point is hard work—you have to know your results inside and out in order to come up with one main point—and that's exactly why most health promotion practitioners don't deliver messages that stick.

If you don't buy into the "one major point" recommendation, remember this: It's insensitive to have 10 major points in a presentation—nothing will suck the oxygen out of a room faster than someone who throws out a PowerPoint presentation that's got 10 bulleted items on a single slide.

Oh, and by the way, here is the ultimate test. If you can't make your point in the length of time that you have in an elevator ride from the first floor to the second, you're not ready to pull the trigger yet.

## Sticky Tip #5: Invite Feedback

The best way to engage an audience is by inviting them to make their opinions, thoughts, and reactions known. For seasoned practitioners, this is something that they do every single time with and with every single group.

But what's the best way to engage your stakeholders in discussing your evaluation results? Ask questions!

By asking questions, you are letting your audience know that you want and value their input. And this is where it's nice to know the right questions to ask. If you really want people to engage in your presentation, be sure to ask questions that begin with "why," "how," and "what"—and avoid questions that start with "do," "did," and "are."

The reason that this is important is that why, how and what questions generally require a more in-depth answer. For example, "How did the results strike you?" or "What are your overall reactions?" If you ask questions like these—people have to engage. Now, on the other hand, if you ask questions like, "Did that make sense?" or "Are you comfortable with this data?" you'll get one word answers and that makes for some very uncomfortable and unsatisfying interactions.

## Bonus Sticky Tip: Poke Holes!

If you follow the previously mentioned five sticky tips, you'll greatly increase your chances of success. Remember, your goal is to get your message across and have others make sense of it—and even embrace it. But here's one more for the road. If you want your message to stick—have your closest colleagues poke holes in it before you start communicating with others. By poking holes we mean having your closest friends start giving you feedback on your information—and the more intense and the more radically honest the feedback, the better off you'll be.

## Summary

In this article, we've presented five important tips to help you get your evaluation results to take hold in the organization. We're convinced—and successful practitioners will support us on this—that if you follow these tips, you'll greatly increase your chance of successfully advancing the cause of health and well-being throughout your organization. ★