Fundamentals Course Homework

Session 3

In this session, we've touched on the idea of the necessity of reports and presentations for a BR&E program using a volunteer visitor methodology with a "blitz" approach.

For this session, I'd like for you to think about the benefits (and perhaps challenges) in preparing reports and presentations for the BR&E visitation program that you are envisioning in your REN. Please think about the following questions:

- To whom or what groups would the reports/presentations be delivered?
- How would this benefit the strength of the REN BR&E program?
- What would be included in the report given that the collection of data in a continuous model is likely to be relatively slow?
- How would you turn data into information for the audience(s)?

Due by the beginning of the June 11, 2020 session.

Response 1

As we are a private nonprofit, the results would be presented to our investors first and foremost. We would also present some of the appropriate results to various government agencies and our education system. For instance, if we find that our public safety sector is serving our businesses very well, then we would want them to know. If workforce is an issue, our education system would need to know the specific issues.

How would this benefit the strength of the BR&E program?

This would benefit the program's strength in that this would show that the program provides value to various sectors of the community. The overall health of the economy in terms of jobs, wages, etc. can be reported to local government. Concerns relating to healthcare, workforce, safety, infrastructure, etc. that are expressed in the survey can be reported back to the responsible agencies and organizations. All of the information collected will show that the program has value and will perpetuate the strength of the program.

What would be included in the report given that the collection of data in a continuous model is likely to be relatively slow?

This process would identify trends rather than an overall snapshot of the community. It would be focused on working with existing industry and would seem to be more limited in scope. This program would identify businesses that are looking to expand or are struggling. It would not give an overall 30,000 view of the community on an annual basis.

How would you turn data into information for the audiences?

The data would be converted into a report showing the overall status of various sectors of the community at a given time. Results that are tabulated can identify specific issues and would assist in developing priorities for various sectors of the community.

Response 2

- To whom or what groups would the reports/presentations be delivered? I think if it was a segmented approach after a certain industry then you would have those business leaders in the room and any association involved with that industry. These presentations would be presented to council, Chamber board, Community Futures any group that could benefit from this data would be welcome. Keeping that trust there with the business community will go a long way as you continue with the BR&E program.
- How would this benefit the strength of the REN BR&E program? Having reports and presentations validate the hard work put into the program. It's an opportunity to help businesses grow and support each other. It helps our Universities and colleges know what additional programming needs to be offered to support the diverse growing economy. It shows the business community that you are invested in them and that you listen to their concerns and are there to help and support. This would clarify the labor force shortage, find out any expansion plans and be able to offer guidance.
- What would be included in the report given that the collection of data in a continuous model is likely to be relatively slow? The approach to the whole program would be segmented. After all businesses were visited in that segment or industry a report would be completed on those findings. While that report is being compiled from the data collected from the surveys the team continues to visit another segment or industry to keep the momentum going. Once the report was completed it would be presented to Council and then we would engage the other stakeholders and industry.

How would you turn data into information for the audience(s)? To relay the data received into information for the audience I would put together a presentation that I would share at a group presentation. I would also compile a report including graphs and antidotes about the data. In this report I would elaborate on the survey methods and procedures and findings.

Response 3

To whom would the Reports and Presentations be given?

Stakeholders in the community and in Economic Development:

- Municipal councils
- EDO groups and agents
- Industry associations

- Business owners/managers
- Municipal employees
- Federal and Provincial economic development representatives and groups
- Politicians
- Rotary/Lions Clubs and local groups
- Chambers of commerce and Boards of Trade
- Boards of directors, like REN board and others

How would this benefit the BRE program / REN

A report or presentation would generate understanding of the BRE.

By communicating to key stakeholders:

- What the REN is doing
- What the BRE project is about and its objectives
- What the survey is about
- The findings of the survey
- The most important implications of the survey for BRE.

The effort would attempt to achieve support, buy-in, understanding, interest from the stakeholders. It would hopefully generate a common direction of work from stakeholders by presenting a vision that could be shared.

What would be included in the report?

- Information:
  - Results of the analysis of the data: 5 to 8 of the most important averages / or indicators that relate to BRE for the region
  - Highlight and expansion of Red, Yellow and Green flags found during the visits
- Trends observed
- Conclusions that could be drawn from the data
- Answers to open ended questions that were recurring, typical or noteworthy - mainly important and common observations made by the sample participants,
- Ideas for moving forward with BRE based on the data from the survey. Potential action items.

A description of the methodology:

- a brief description of
  - the survey,
  - the visitation procedure
- the number and characterization of the companies visited, including the number of participants from each industry or sector
- an overview of the analysis process of the survey data
- the date range of the survey

- the people who took part in the visits and those who analyzed the data

How would you convert your data into information for the audience?

Data from the survey would be analyzed statistically. Which option we would use for statistical analysis is to be determined.

We would use graphs and tables to present the results of the analysis if they were sufficiently concise and on point. And we would include brief discussions of the data.

Open ended questions would be reviewed thoroughly for commonalities and would be discussed wherever there was some consensus or noteworthy ideas, as well as potential implications.

Response 4

1. The report/presentation would be delivered to the collective stakeholder groups which I would consider in three categories: First would be the businesses themselves. Secondly the community/regional leadership group including the team involved with the process. The third would be directed at the group(s) of internal/external decisionmakers including both the public/private sector that is needed to implement prescribed actions revealed by the process.
2. Benefit comes from completing a process. Assembling data then developing information which then creates knowledge that can be used form solutions for improvements. Simple participation in this process will facilitate communication which will (hopefully) give rise to those participants being more informed, experience and educated on local conditions as a result of the process. Working with volunteers can always be challenging and one needs to find those that are dedicated with good people skills and train them on the process along with the benefits.
3. In a Continuous Model time has to elapse for data accumulation to the extent that it can then be compared to a similar unit(s) of time and conclusion formed. Collection must be diligent, timely and accurate over the intended period or for the ongoing basis. In order to draw a conclusion.
4. Render the data down to the most vital, useful, important and interesting state while practicing the concept of “Keep it Simple, Stupid”. Basically, don’t overwhelm the audience/stakeholder with data when they want information or even more important, SOLUTIONS. To achieve maximum levels of communication (and retention) in a presentation setting, as the presenter, I would want to be onsite with the targeted audience and employ all three forms of communication. Written would consist of a short, but well produced set of handout material which could only be one page but would convey the most important information for them to take away. Support material can always be requested by those who may need it. Visual information would be in the form of perhaps a power point presentation that would appeal to the visual learner and should be kept interesting and informative. Finally, the Audio or Verbal presentation would compliment and reinforce the previous two methods and can be used to accentuate various aspect of the process and outcomes. Perhaps even acknowledge various observations, challenges or interesting outliers that were not made part of the formal presentation. Being present is also an excellent time to gain feedback or make observations.

Response 5

We will deliver our reports/presentations to two distinct target groups:

1) Our stakeholders (municipal partners and funders), to demonstrate the "return on investment" they are getting through continued funding of an economic development office, as well as to better inform them about why the office is prioritizing certain projects; and

2) Our local business community, to explain to them the work of our REN, as well as the areas of priority support being provided by our team.

Sharing this information with both our stakeholders/funders and our business community will not only help us to increase the level of local engagement and buy-in with the work of our office, but it will improve the likelihood that our work will be valued and sustained. It will also aid us in measuring the changes that are effected through our team's work, or show us areas where more improvement is needed.

Our first reports will focus on "checking the pulse" of the business community, to identify which areas of economic development are viewed as priorities by the business community. I expect that much of our data will focus on issues involving labour market shortages, and the root causes thereof (ie aging population; skill mismatch; need for customized education programs; etc.)

Our starting point with turning data into information will likely be providing statistical data in a visual format that is easy for the target groups to review and understand quickly. For example, both target audiences would benefit from seeing graphical data around the age and educational demographics in our community, as this will help them in understanding the root causes of the labour market shortages being experienced by our business community.