

Outcome Measurement Myths  
Organizational Yardstick

**Myth: Evaluation is a complex science. I don't have time to learn it.**

No. It's a practical activity. If you can run an organization, you can surely implement an evaluation process.

Myth: It's an event to get over with and then move on.

No. Outcome evaluation is an ongoing process. It takes months to develop, test and polish -- however, many of the activities required to carry out outcome evaluation are activities that you're either already doing or you should be doing.

**Myth: Evaluation is a whole new set of activities – we don't have the resources.**

No. Most of these activities in the outcome evaluation process are normal management functions that need to be carried out anyway in order to evolve your organization to the next level.

**Myth: There's a "right" way to do outcome evaluation. What if I don't get it right?**

No. Each outcome evaluation process is somewhat different, depending on the needs and nature of the nonprofit organization and its programs. Consequently, each nonprofit is the "expert" at their outcomes plan. Therefore, start simple, but start and learn as you go along in your outcome planning and implementation.

**Myth: Funders will accept or reject my outcome plan.**

No. Enlightened funders will (or at least, should) work with you, for example, to polish your outcomes, indicators and outcomes targets. Especially if your organization is a new nonprofit and/or a new program, then you very likely will need some help -- and time -- to develop and polish your outcomes plan.

**Myth: I always know what my clients need - I don't need outcome evaluation to tell me if I'm really meeting the needs of my clients or not.**

Not true. You don't always know what you don't know about the needs of your clients - outcome evaluation helps ensure that you always know the needs of your clients. Outcome evaluation sets up structures in your organization so that your organization remains focused on the current needs of your clients. Also, you won't always be around - outcome measures help ensure that your organization remains focused on the most appropriate, current needs of clients even after you've left your organization.