

United Way of Greater Augusta Organizational Yardstick Training

Outcome Measures, Output Measures

Outcome Measures - a measure of the result of a system, relative to the aim. An outcome measure is used to measure the success of a system.

(For example, the outcome measure could be the percentage of people who do not get polio. An output measure, for example, would be the number of people vaccinated with the polio vaccine. Often management focuses on output measures which do not tell you about the success but rather are a measure of activity. Care should be taken to define good outcome measures to use in determining the success of programs and in determining the whether improvement projects result in improved outcomes.)

Examples of outcome measures: literacy rate, infant mortality rate, days without an accident on a job site, students finding a job they want (for a university), tomato yield from a tomato plant, on time arrival at destination, percentage of the population who can see (for a measure of the success of a program to eliminate preventable blindness).

Related terms:

- **Output Measures** - a measure of activity, for example, the number of cars produced by an assembly line, or the amount of money spent on education, or the number of phone call processed by a call center.
- **Process Measure** - measures of the performance of a process. Process measures can provide real time feedback that can be acted on quickly, when a process first provides data that something is amiss. Of course, care must be taken to avoid [tampering](#).
- **Activity Measure** - a measure of the level of resources committed to a process.

So as an example, the total amount of dollars spent to eliminate polio in the United States would represent an **activity measure** (how much money was committed to the activity). An **in-process measure** could be (looking at various regions of the country possibly) a measure what percentage of potential vaccinations that were wasted (spoiled, lost...). Another **in-process measure** example could be the cost per vaccination (say \$30 million dollars for to run the whole program which results in 15 million vaccinations).

From this example, an **outcome measure** could be the reduction of polio in the population (for example, .5% of the population was newly diagnosed with polio and in the first year and the next year it was .3% and then .1%...).