Identification of Outcomes/A Classification System

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ABSTRACT

One of the least explored aspects of the needs assessment process is the concept of equivalency value in the substitution of products and services. Most needs assessments are based upon wants and desires, not upon an understanding of what activities can be substituted to bring about the desired outcome in the bargaining or programming process. A case study was undertaken to illustrate the importance of substitution values in the process of program development. Results suggest that activities can be segregated on an orthogonal basis to give program administrators the substitution value of activities to improve their program management technique. This type of information helps to establish an order or sequence to the activity for the development of better organizational skills. It also helps them better identify target audiences in relation to production of individualized programs.

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INTRODUCTION

The needs assessment process is the cornerstone of most marketing and program decisions. If the proper type of information is not obtained in this phase of marketng and program development, erroneous conclusions and poor decisions are the direct result. The consequence is little continuity or no relationships among activities. Programs are just an isolated group of unrelated events that have an impact upon the individual but not in any consistent direction(2,3). The purpose of the needs assessment process is to increase effectiveness and efficiency in program administration by raising the question of impact and outcome through the most effective vehicles or methods. One of the most important processes in program development is the establishment of continuity. This has been one of the major problems isolated to the production of more effective program outcomes(2,3).

What usually happens in the needs assessment process is that a list of activities is produced and the individual is asked to select from among them based upon some type of popularity rating. The needs assessment, in this case, turns into a wish list. The survey in this

type of study is basically a popularity contest of activities that the individual has been exposed or would like to be exposed. The more rudimentary question of basic needs is bypassed in the favor of an activity survey. The function of the needs assessment is to obtain an idea about outcomes in terms of cognitive, emotional and social events that is needed to fulfill the change in growth potentials of the individual(1,2). The basic outcome of a needs assessment process is not actvities but the translating of needs such as escape and security into some type of problem statement or positive aspect of growth and development. Once the problems of the individual are understood, then there must be a separate analysis to identify types of activities that will produce the desired outcomes projected in the problem statement. The next phase in the needs assessment process is determining the substitution or equivalency value of activities, that is, the range of activities that will produce the outcome stated in the problem analysis phase. Activities have a basic personality and a certain ability or potential to produce outcomes better than other types of activities. It is important to understand the basic nature and value of an activity in terms of the types of outcomes that it can produce. It is also important to mix the needs and activities in such a way as to achieve effectively the outcomes stated in the problem analyses. It is the basic function of the programmer to make wise choices in selection of activities to achieve the most effective route to helping the individual in his growth and development process. Program administration comes into play when the activities are coordinated in such a way as to achieve the overall goals and objectives of the agency. The primary program specialist is concerned with the individual where as program administrator is concerned about the goals and objectives of the agency and its operation. His function is to insure continuity among programs, that is, fitting the pieces together in such a way as to achieve the agency's goals and objectives. The function of the program administrator is at a different level. He is at a mega-level and the primary programmer is at a micro-level.

The purpose of this study was to examine equivalency of activities at the micro-level and to examine the program administration function at the mega-level to suggest guidelines to help him/her in the needs assessment process in the substitution of one activity for another. There is less known about this phase of the needs assessment process because of a lack of emphasis upon activities and more of a focus upon people. Needs assessment, in essence, applies to both people and activities and how to mix and match these elements together to produce a consistent outcome at both the mega and micro-levels.

SCOPE OF STUDY

In the needs assessment process, there is a difference between direct and indirect operations. This case study was undertaken to focus on the indirect services as the component of needs assessment process. The definition for direct leisure services is those components or elements that directly interface with the public in providing facilities, programs and/or services. Indirect operations are those that provide facilities, programs and/or services as a vehicle for the achievement of a goal or objective. The primary difference between these two dimensions is in the approach. One is a hard sell while the other is soft. Some of the important differences are:

DIRECT	INDIRECT
(1) Profit is primary motive	People and outcomes primary motives
(2) Theory X is important	Theory Y is important
(3) Convenience services	Hospitality type of operations
(4) Focus on facilities	Focus on programming
(5) Focuses on broader aspect such as food, lodging, etc.	Focuses on personal services
(6) Focuses on mega-level	Focuses on micro-level
(7) External focus	Internal focus

The above statements suggest a dichotomy between direct and indirect services. It represents a difference between various points of operation within the leisure industry. Those organizations that have an effective indirect system also have an effective direct operation. One usually translates to the other because of the philosophy of quality services. The reason the indirect services were chosen to be studied was because of its focus upon programming, especially at the micro-level. One industry that has developed a good philosophy of management and programming is employee services. Much can be learned from an indepth study of this programming as well as the skills related to indirect operations.

METHODOLOGY

A national survey was conducted in cooperation with the National Employee and Recreation Service Association. Information was sought on operations, areas and facilities, programming, and services offered. A factor analysis (Varimax) was performed on each of the major variable category types. An orthogonal solution was used to reduce multicoliniarity.

RESULTS

Results were reported by the following major variable types: management, facilities, services, sport, social activities, outdoor actvities, cultural activities, ticket sales, awards, and miscellaneous. The activities that loaded on one particular factor were analyzed to identify a common thread by a group of expert activity specialists. This type of information gives an idea the major dimensions that exist in a particular activity group and what the individuals are seeking from their experience. A 0.4 probability level was used to determine the significance for incorporation of that variable in the study. If a variable loaded high on two of the factors, it was deleted from the analysis to maintain the purity of the orthogonal solution.

Management

There were five factors isolated from the program administration/mega-level analysis. They were: personnel/resources, finances/programs, size of the organization, management philosophy (direct or indirect company influences), and the company role in financing the program.

Facilities

There were two factors isolated in the analysis of facilities. They were: facilities related to program and style of facility operation (direct and indirect company involvement).

Special Activities

There were three factors isolated under the topic of special activities. They were: services, travel/domestic, and travel/adventure.

Sports-Man

There were seven factors isolated in the men's sports category. They were: sports involving offensive/defense/strategy, sports that involve hand-eye coordination, finesse sports that include fine muscles, sports that involve strength/endurance/power, target sports, motion sports, and sports that involve hand-eye coordination with speed.

Sports-Women

There were six factors isolated in the analysis of women's sports. They were: sports that involve offense/defense/strategy, target sports, sports that involve hand-eye coordination, sports that involve hand-eye coordination with speed, finesse sports, and motion sports.

Social Activities-Men

There were four factors isolated. They were: table games, entertainment/social coed, games involving cognitive and intellectual ability, and male oriented entertainment.

Social Activities-Women

There were four factors isolated in the analysis of women's activities. They were: table games, social/family games, card games, and social women's entertainment.

Outdoor Activities-Men

There were five factors isolated in the analysis of men's activities. They were: adventure/risk, power sports, traditional adv nture, snow activities, and family type of activities.

Outdoor Activities-Women

There were six factors isolated in the analysis of women's activities. They were: water sports, traditional adventure, risk/adventure, skiing, sledding, and family activities.

Cultural Activities-Men

There were seven factors isolated in the analysis of the men's activities. They were: hobbies/use of hands, cognitive/imagination and creativity, entertainment/music, entertainment/performance, drama, fine skills, and traditional culture.

Cultural Activities-Women

There were ten factors isolated in the analysis of women's activites. There were: home crafts/arts, entertainment, vocal, performing arts, traditional culture, music, intellectual/concentration, expressive activities, passive entertainment, and aggressive expression.

Ticket Sales-Men

There were two factors isolated. There were: entertainment/home and entertanment/vacation.

Ticket Sales-Women

There were two factors isolated. They were: entertainment/home and entertainment/vacation.

Miscellaneous

There were four factors isolated. They were: performances, club activities, adventure, and home crafts.

Awards

There were three factors isolated. They were: type of award, purchasing style, and personalized service.

IMPLICATIONS

If a Maslowian model is used to interpret the results, findings come into perspective in relation to outcomes that represent the range of human experiences. Leisure is an outlet of human emotions and an individual seeks this relief in a type of activity that he/she pursues in his/her free time. The activities do not have any definition or limits as many professionals place on them. In fact, some of the artificial titles placed on activities do not help to interpret the results. Only when the activities are isolated in an overview framework, and such factors as adventure, risk, and self-expression are expressed, do outcomes begin to be better understood. There were similarities based on participation style.

The most striking observation made by the content specialist in analyzing the activities was the commonness of some experiences from completely divergent categories. For example, some individuals seek the outlets of risk in snow skiing while others seek it in the form of performing in front of an audience. The only common thread among these activities is the risk involved and the sense of adventure to accomplish both tasks. This is strictly a subjective observation but it may be the most significant outcome of the study, suggesting that the traditional classification of activity creates cultural barriers that are hard to overcome. In fact, it would seem that all activities have the potential to produce cognitive, emotional, and social outcomes. It is how the individual approaches these activities that a personal leisure style begins to take shape. Only in the analysis of the complete leisure and workstyle in relation to the fulfilling of needs can the leisure activities begin to take on a sense of importance of what accomplishment or what purpose leisure will play in an individual's life. A leisure activity analysis only presents a part of the picture and not the true understanding of why one participates. These results are very heart warming in that it represents the range of human experiences that have many times not been provided by programmers.

There is a close correlation among types of outcomes based upon of cognitive, emotional, and social outcomes. A more definitive study needs to be undertaken to investigate outcomes and obtain more of the dynamics of participation. When reviewing the factors, there is a common dimension than can be identified such as in the cultural activities for women/self-expression. These results of self-expression must be explored

in terms of cognitive, emotional, and social outcomes. This study has only begun to investigate basic relationships and has not delved into the more rudimentary dynamics of causality. Some factors can be identified by analyzing the inter and intra- relationships among the factor types. This study has exposed the issue of equivalents and has pointed to of the necessity of other equivalency studies to help understand the needs assessment process.

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