

Audience research, consultation and evaluation

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Really listening to and learning from visitors and non-(potential) visitors is a powerful way to:



'Evaluation' as an umbrella term

- Evaluation
- Consultation
- Monitoring
- Profiling
- Research

Accreditation Scheme: section three – users and their experiences

Section 3.1: Good quality services and development

- 3.1.1 The Museum must understand who its users and non users are.
- 3.1.2 The Museum must evaluate and analyse information to assess users' needs.

Before you begin...

You need to know:

- **what** you want to find out
- **why** you want to find it out
- **which** questions will you ask
- **who** you are going to ask
- **who** the information is for
- **how** you are going to tell them
- **who** will collect the data and when
- **what** you will do with the information

*Only then can you begin to think about **which tools** to use to provide you with the information you need*

Consultation Questions

For accreditation it's specifically about

- Talking to your users to find out what you could do better
- Talking to your non-users to find out what their barriers are to participation.

Questionnaires

(or feedback forms)

- Ensure representative sample
(more important than sample size)
- Can include closed/open questions, also multiple choice and scale questions
- Provide quantitative and qualitative data
- Always pilot questions with small sample
- Can be time-consuming to analyse
- No opportunity for follow-up

Interviews

- Structured or unstructured
- Open or closed questions
- Quantitative and qualitative data
- Can be recorded (audio tape/digital)
- Can include other techniques such as Personal Meaning Mapping
- Opportunity to clarify/follow up
- Time-consuming

Focus groups

- Group interview – 5-8 people
- Lasts 1-2 hours
- Can incorporate other evaluation tools and visual material
- Open-ended questions
- Opportunity to clarify/follow up
- Provides qualitative data – ideas, feelings, opinions, etc.
- Led by facilitator
- Can be recorded (audio-tape/digital) and transcribed

Observation and tracking

- Provides quantitative data: numbers, time spent, etc.
- Provides qualitative data, eg. level of engagement, behaviour, conversation
- Useful to have floor plan and checklist
- Also record unexpected behaviour
- Information about what visitors really do
- Time-consuming
- Risk of making assumptions

Collecting comments

- Comments book, board or box
- Visitors like to see what other visitors think
- More creative responses, e.g.. pictures
- Can ask a question(s) to encourage responses
- May need to edit responses
- Can provide contact details for follow up
- Self-selecting so not representative
- Analyse by grouping into categories
- Can provide information for further evaluation

Post-it notes 😊 ☹️

Sticky dot rating

Personal meaning mapping

If the museum was an
animal.....

Post-it notes 😊 ☹️

As a family choose
your favourite and least
favourite :

- text panel
- object caption
- objectetc.

Observation

Discussion

Sticky dot rating

Question on a flipchart sheet
e.g..

*How much did the gallery help
you find out what it was like to
live in Roman Bromley?*

☹️-----XX---X---X---XXXX--😊

Participants stick dots up
(colour-code)

Discuss reasons for positions

Personal Meaning Mapping

- Blank paper with central heading, e.g..

Jack the Ripper and the East End

- Write down any ideas, associations, etc.
- Open-ended, user-centred way of capturing preconceptions, knowledge, attitudes, feelings
- Starting point for further discussion

If the museum was an animal...

- *If the museum was an animal, what animal would it be, and why?*
- Participants make creatures out of plasticine, label them and then discuss



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