Keeping Programs on Track: Monitoring Program Recommendations

Co-Authors

Katherine Johnson, Johnson Consulting Group
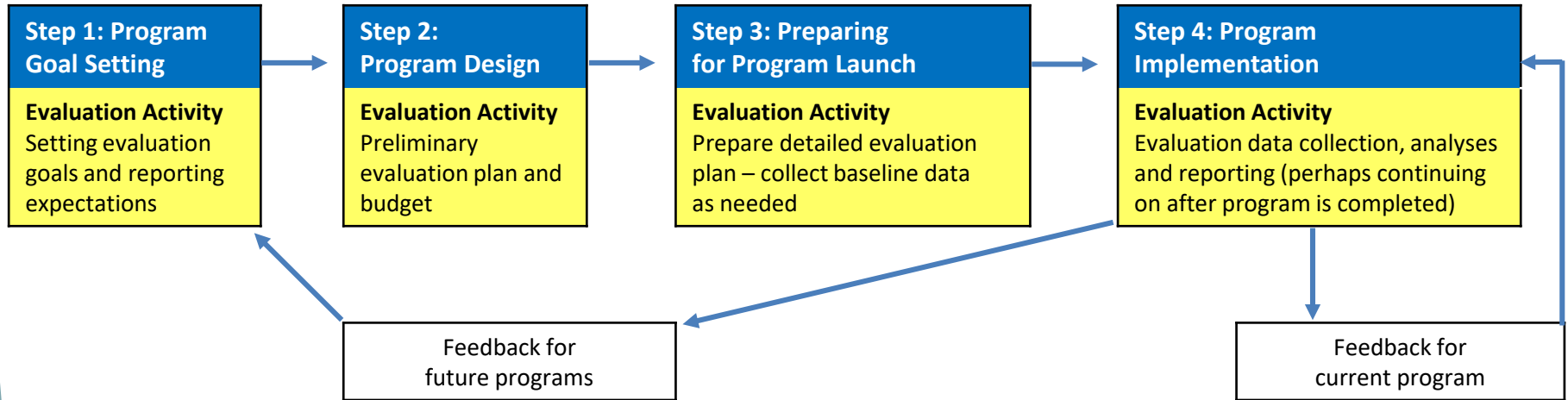
Scott Reeves and Hanna Lee, Cadmus Group

Gregg Eisenberg, Eisenberg Energy

Recommendations Are Essential to Program Design and Refinement

Program Implementation Cycle With High-Level Evaluation Activities

Step 1: Program Goal Setting	**Step 2: Program Design**	**Step 3: Preparing for Program Launch**	**Step 4: Program Implementation**
Evaluation Activity Setting evaluation goals and reporting expectations	**Evaluation Activity** Preliminary evaluation plan and budget	**Evaluation Activity** Prepare detailed evaluation plan – collect baseline data as needed	**Evaluation Activity** Evaluation data collection, analyses and reporting (perhaps continuing on after program is completed)

Feedback for future programs

Feedback for current program

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Few Rules of the Roads for Process Evaluations

- ***Impact Evaluations*** Have:
  - IPMVP Protocols
  - Uniform Methods Project Protocols
  - NTG Batteries

Process Evaluation Protocols

- Developed for New York; used in Arkansas and Missouri

Provide a progress report for each recommendation for program improvement made in previously conducted evaluations. For each evaluation recommendation, the report should indicate whether the recommendation has been accepted and implemented, rejected, or is still under consideration. If the recommendation is still under consideration, then an explanation should be provided for the steps underway to reach an implementation decision for that recommendation;

Any recommendations should be strategic in nature, that is designed to enhance overall program operations or efficiency. The evaluators may also provide tactical suggestions on ways to refine specific program elements, such as reefing the marketing messaging or increasing contractor training sessions. These tactical suggestions do not need to be reported or tracked over time. Only strategic recommendations that provide actionable guidance for the program staff and/or implementer must be tracked and reported for every evaluation.
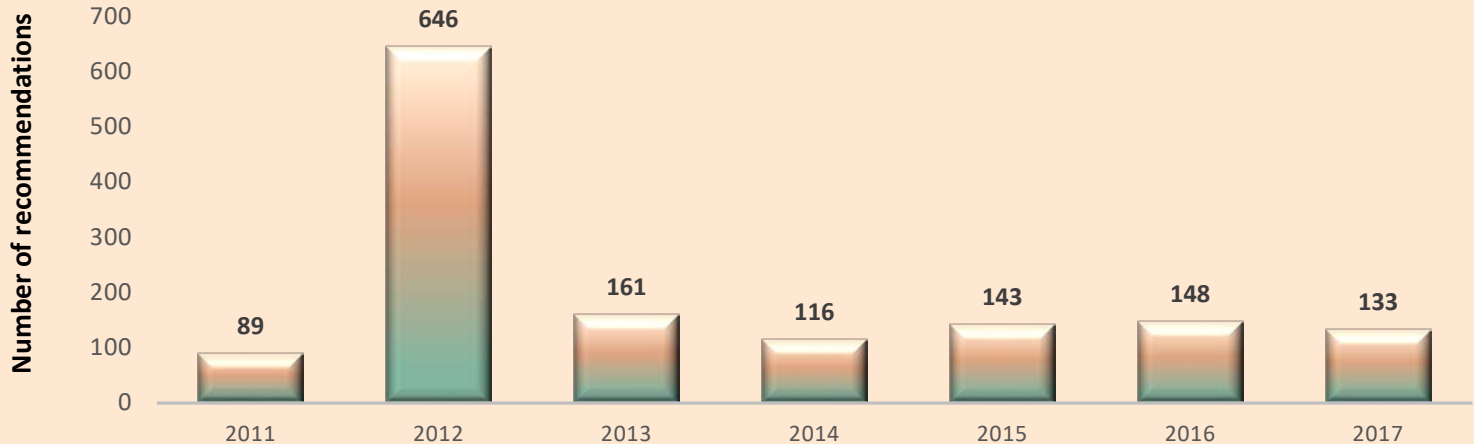
Strategic vs. Tactical Recommendations

- ***Strategic recommendations*** lead to lasting ***long-term*** improvements

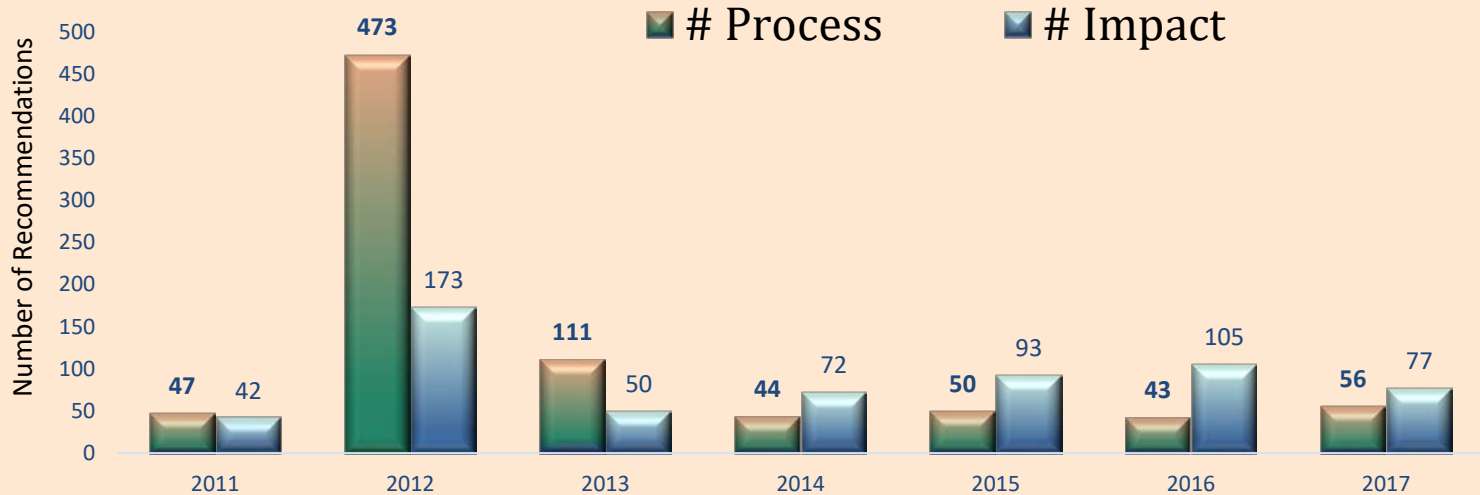- ***Tactical recommendations*** focus on ***short-term*** changes.

Practical Applications

Total Number of Recommendations Reported Annually from 2011-2017 (N=1,436)

Number of recommendations

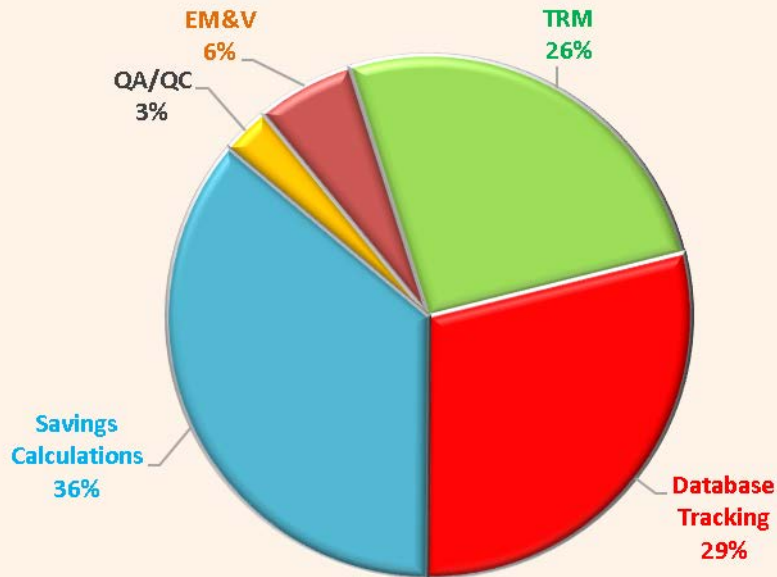| Year	Value
2011	89
2012	646
2013	161
2014	116
2015	143
2016	148
2017	133

Practical Applications

Total Number of Program Recommendations by Category Process (N=824) Impact (N=612)

Tracking Recommendation Examples
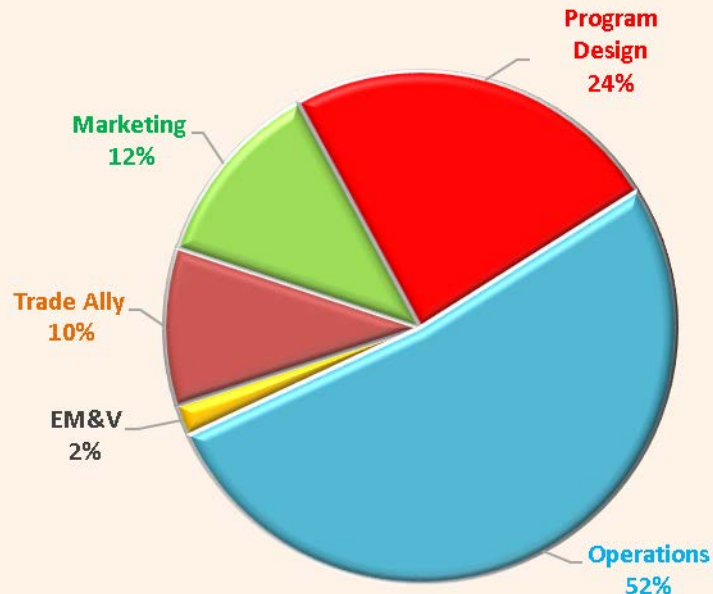

Distribution of PY2015 Impact Evaluation Recommendations by Topic Area (N=93)

- EM&V 6%
- QA/QC 3%
- TRM 26%
- Savings Calculations 36%
- Database Tracking 29%

Distribution of PY2015 Process Evaluation Recommendations by Topic Area (N=50)

- Program Design 24%
- Marketing 12%
- Trade Ally 10%
- EM&V 2%
- Operations 52%

Pros and Cons of Recommendations Tracking

IEM Annual Report Excerpt 2012

Industry best practices dictate that the process evaluations begin by assessing the disposition of the previous process evaluations recommendations. Unfortunately, all the evaluations fell short in this area. Therefore, this is a significant area for improvement for all evaluators to pursue in subsequent process evaluation activities going forward. (IEM Annual Report PY2012 EM&V Report, p. 67)

IEM Annual Report Excerpt 2015

The utilities have considered all of the previous recommendations and implemented more than half of them. The evaluators reported the status of the previous recommendations, in accordance with the Process Evaluation Protocol C. Overall, most of these recommendations (n=118) have been implemented (53%) while a few are still in progress (22%). (IEM Annual Report PY2015 EM&V Report, p. v)

IEM Annual Report, 2017

The reporting on the status of all of the previous recommendations was incomplete for four of the six reports in this evaluation year. (IEM Annual Report PY2017 EM&V p. 71)

Recommendations Tracker for Maryland Programs

Program	Category	Total # of Recommendations	Total % of Recommendations
LIEEP	Communications	2	2%
	Customer Follow-up	1	1%
	Customer Satisfaction	2	2%
	Customer Targeting	1	1%
	Database Tracking	13	13%
	Energy Education	3	3%
	Energy Savings	0	0%
	Evaluation	15	15%
	Marketing & Outreach	8	8%
	Program Design	8	8%
	Program Operations	18	18%
	QA/QC	3	3%
	TRM	2	2%
MEEHA	Communications	2	2%
	Customer Follow-up	0	0%
	Customer Satisfaction	0	0%
	Customer Targeting	0	0%
	Database Tracking	5	5%
	Energy Education	0	0%
	Energy Savings	1	1%
	Evaluation	2	2%
	Marketing & Outreach	0	0%
	Program Design	5	5%
	Program Operations	1	1%

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Tracking Categories

Maryland's LIEEP's Recommendations Status

Type	Current Status					Total # of Recommendations	Total % of Recommendations
	Complete	In Progress/ Delayed	Partially Complete	Rejected	Not Applicable		
Impact	2	6	10	0	0	45	46%
Process	10	4	14	0	0	49	50%
Best Practices	0	2	1	0	0	4	4%
Total	12	0	0	0	0	98	100%

Key Benefits from Tracking Recommendations

- **Provide** another way to identify effectiveness of program operations over time
- **Pinpoint** areas for improvement in meaningful ways
- **Increase** overall accountability and transparency during the evaluation period
- **Integrate** recommendations into new program designs and;
- **Create** an important record to document program achievements

Using a recommendations tracker ensures that these program recommendations fulfill the over-arching objective of program evaluation- to provide guidance for program operations and input for program design, as summarized in the NAPEE feedback loop.

Johnson
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Questions?

- Dr. Katherine Johnson
- Johnson Consulting Group
- Email: kjohnson@johnsonconsults.com
- Telephone: 301.461.4865