Chapter Seven

Work Smarter (Not Harder)—Impact for Effort Analysis

20/20 Hindsight in New Hampshire
In the early 1990s, members of the New Hampshire Federation of Humane Organizations took four approaches to reducing euthanasia in their shelters:

1. a public-education campaign promoting spay/neuter,
2. an adoption-promotion campaign (including improved customer service and changes in old-fashioned and rigid adoption policies),
3. individual partnerships with veterinarians to spay/neuter adopted animals and to participate in Spay Day events,
4. and a legislative campaign for a state-funded spay/neuter program providing for spay/neuter of animals adopted from shelters and animals belonging to persons on public assistance.

The results are striking:

1. The public-education campaign was relatively easy and inexpensive to implement—using donated bumper stickers, poster space, and PSAs. It also had no measurable impact on the numbers of animals admitted to or euthanized in shelters. Result: Low Effort/Low Impact

2. The new hiring and training practices required for improving customer service and revamping adoption policies entailed considerable time and expense. While improved customer service has many important benefits for a humane organization, the resulting increased adoptions only accounted for 16% of the reduction in euthanasia rates over time.* Result: High Effort/Low Impact

3. Partnerships with veterinarians to perform spay/neuter on adopted animals and to participate in Spay Day “spay-a-thons” resulted in several thousand neuters per year. However, these neuters required substantial dollars and paid staff time for logistics, transportation, and partnership maintenance. High Effort/High Impact

4. Finally, the legislative effort—while labor intensive in the first few years of lobbying until passage—has required relatively few hours of attention since 1995, and continues to result in an average of 4,200 neuters each year at no cost to shelters. Since the program’s inception, the admission rate in New Hampshire shelters has dropped by 26% and the euthanasia rate has dropped by 77%.* Result: Low Effort/High Impact

In hindsight, it is clear New Hampshire could have saved effort (dollars and time) by evaluating the impact for effort of all four approaches prior to implementation.

*Source: New Hampshire Federation of Humane Organizations, Inc.; Solutions to the Overpopulation of Pets, Inc.

Whatever is worth doing at all… is worth doing well.
—Philip Stanhope
Work Smarter (Not Harder)—Impact for Effort Analysis

**What is it?**
An impact for effort analysis compares what you will put into an initiative (program or service) to what you think you will achieve, in order to identify priorities that yield the best return for animals from your investment of time, energy and dollars.

**Why do it?**
Most organizations operate on limited funds, and donors are becoming increasingly concerned with spending their philanthropic dollars on programs that get the best results. An impact for effort analysis identifies those initiatives that are leveraging your dollars most effectively in moving you towards mission accomplishment.

**When?**
- as part of strategic planning
- to pretest a new program or service
- when determining what programs a new or renovated building should accommodate
- to align programs with your mission
- as a check to see that you are getting the most bang for your buck

**How?**
1. List initiatives.
2. Estimate effort.
3. Define impact.
4. Evaluate impact.
5. Map results.
6. Assess strategies.
Step 1. List initiatives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you are planning for...</th>
<th>your initiatives will be...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>your organization,</td>
<td>a list of your programs and services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>a new program or service,</td>
<td>major elements of the program or service. (For example, for a spay/neuter effort, you might look at activities you are considering—mobile clinics, partnering with the veterinary community, pursuing higher licensing fees for unaltered animals, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>a new facility or renovation,</td>
<td>programs and services you could offer in the new or improved facility.*</td>
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*Check your numbers: Remember, programming adjustments will impact your finances. After completing an impact for effort analysis, be sure to visit Step 1 of your financial feasibility study (see Chapter 9) to ensure that you have enough profitable programs and services for your construction to remain financially feasible.
Step 2. Estimate effort.

For each program or service, estimate the effort involved by evaluating:

- direct costs (wages and related expenses, materials and supplies, capital expenses, operations)
- facility/space
- time (for start-up, for delivery)
- skills
- infrastructure
- technology
- management (staff, volunteers, operations, partnerships/collaborations)

Rate each program or service as a high-effort or low-effort initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
<th>HIGH EFFORT</th>
<th>LOW EFFORT</th>
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Step 3. Define impact.

Begin by converting your mission into observable, measurable results. For example, if your mission is about creating a humane community your list of results might include:

- all dogs and cats are spayed/neutered and wear ID,
- no animals are homeless or unwanted,
- civic and religious leaders publicly condemn cruelty to animals,
- people use humane, nonlethal methods to resolve wildlife conflicts.

Define your measurable results at the bottom of the Impact for Effort Analysis on page 85.

Impact = Behavior Change

How do you know you have made an impact? Suppose you and your dog take a basic manners training class. How will you determine that the training has been successful and worth your time and effort? Will it be enough that the trainer, you and your dog showed up? More likely you will want to see some new behaviors from your dog to feel the training was a success.

Behavior change is what prevention services are all about; and that’s the only way to measure their success. Therefore, if you are evaluating the impact of a humane education program, simply counting the number of kids who attend your programs tells you nothing about impact. To measure impact you will need to count the number of kids who convinced their parents to put ID on their companion animals (or demonstrated some other tangible behavior) as a result.
**Step 4. Evaluate impact.**

Using the measurable outcomes identified in Step 3, evaluate each of your initiatives for how much or how many of the outcomes it accomplishes, and score each as high or low impact.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>INITIATIVE</th>
<th>HIGH IMPACT ✓</th>
<th>LOW IMPACT ✓</th>
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Step 5. Map results.

Each of your programs and services now has a rating of high or low effort and high or low impact. Using the Impact for Effort Analysis on page 85, place each program or service in the corresponding box. Don’t be surprised or discouraged to find you have been allocating resources towards ineffective programs. That kind of insight is exactly the purpose of an impact for effort analysis.

Here are some of the typical impact for effort findings of animal protection organizations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EFFORT</th>
<th>IMPACT</th>
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<td><strong>Adoptions</strong></td>
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<td>High Effort/Low Impact</td>
<td>Adoption programs are often considered high effort—because of staff and animal care expenses—and low impact—because adoptions only account for about 18-20% of the animals in a community. (APPMA 2002)</td>
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<td>Low Effort/Low Impact</td>
<td>Organizations like Erie County SPCA are improving the impact of adoptions by expanding market share through off-sites (see page 3) and by neutering all animals prior to adoption to increase the proportion of owned animals in the community who are sterilized.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spay/Neuter</strong></td>
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<td>High Effort/High Impact</td>
<td>Most organizations that are effectively closing in on zero euthanasia of adoptable animals community-wide are investing substantial resources in high-volume, targeted spay/neuter to reduce overpopulation. (See Sustainable Impact on page 51.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>It is not at all uncommon for organizations to find that none of their high impact programs operate with low effort. With planning, however, it is possible to invest in volunteer management so that programs such as foster care, behavior help lines and off-site adoptions can become high impact for low effort.</td>
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Step 6. Assess strategy.

Take a good look at your impact for effort analysis. For each program or service, how will the effort or the impact change over time?

Plan for the next two to five years by answering the questions in the chart below.

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**Impact for Effort Changes over Time**

A foster care program, for example, may be very high effort in the first two years with relatively low impact (outcomes). Once the infrastructure is well established, however, years three through five of a well-run foster program could enable you to shelter and successfully place 20% more animals, while simultaneously reducing the direct costs of sheltering those animals.

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United Way, “Measuring Outcomes,” at http://national.unitedway.org/outcomes/files/cmtyout1.pdf; The MacMillan Matrix helps you determine strategy for each program or service, visit www.allianceonline.org/FAQs.html, choose “Strategic Planning” and then click on “How can we do a competitive analysis?”
IMPACT FOR EFFORT ANALYSIS

Plot your initiatives in the matrix below according to whether they require low or high effort and result in low or high impact.

* Impact is measured by results. List your desired mission outcomes (results).

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