

Turning the Curve

Outcomes Based Accountability

Adapted from 'Trying Hard Is Not Good Enough'

Mark Friedman



Working Together with Children,
Young People and Families

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Mark Friedman (2005). *Trying Hard is Not Good Enough - How to Produce Measurable Improvements for Customers and communities*, Trafford.

www.raguide.org

www.resultsaccountability.com

Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) Mark Friedman

What is OBA?

OBA is a way of thinking and taking action that can improve outcomes for populations, organisations and communities. When we talk about populations, we may be referring to whole populations such as the population of England or sub populations such as young people or drug users. OBA can also be used to improve the performance of projects and programmes of work.

How does OBA work?

OBA starts with the desired outcome and works backwards.

What do we want?

How will we recognise it?

What will it take to get there?

These outcomes may be conditions of well - being such as: Young people succeeding, as measured by a reduction in the teenage conception rate, or a safe neighbourhood as measured by the crime rate. For projects and programmes of work, the ends are how the customers are better off when the project/programme works as well as it should.

How can it help?

OBA is a process that gets you and your partners from talk to action quickly, using plain language and methods that everyone can understand and use. OBA is an inclusive process to which everyone can contribute.

The process

Mark Friedman refers to the problem of the leaking roof as an example of OBA in action.

1. Have you ever had a leaking roof?
2. You know it is leaking, you see the water dripping down. You are measuring how bad it is by collecting and counting inches/ centimetres of water in the bucket. (**Experience and measure**)
3. Then someone has to get on the roof and figure out why it is leaking (**Story behind the baseline**)
4. In order to fix the roof, you need to think who can help you. (**Partners**)
5. Next you think about how it could be fixed (**what works**)
6. Finally you decide what you need to do to fix it (**Action plan**)
7. You will know it is fixed when you stop seeing the water dripping.
8. If the water is still dripping you need to revisit the process until the leak is fixed

Although this process is a little more complicated when used to fix conditions in a community or project, the same process thinking process is used.

OBA uses common language:

Outcomes: A condition of wellbeing for children, adults, families or communities;

Indicator: A measure which helps quantify the achievement of an outcome;

Baselines: What the measures show about where we have been and where we are headed;

Turning the curve: What success looks like if we do better than the baseline;

Strategies: What works to improve these conditions;

Performance measures: How do we know if programmes and agencies are working? OBA uses three performance measures: *How much did we do? How well did we do it? And Is anyone better off?*

Population and Performance Accountability

OBA keeps population accountability separate from performance accountability. Population accountability belongs to partnerships. No single agency should take responsibility for a population measure, for example: the reduction of teenage conceptions, although single agencies will contribute to a population outcomes by making a difference in the lives of their customers.

Data

OBA places a high value on the use of data to gauge success or failure against a baseline and recognises other sources of knowledge such as anecdotes and accomplishments that go beyond the collection of numbers and statistics. If there isn't any data available experience can be used as a temporary substitute to drive the decision making process and create an action plan.

Talk to action for population accountability

7 Key Questions

The step-by-step process starts with a group of partners who wish to improve the quality of life in a community.

- Step 1: What are the quality of life conditions we want for the children, adults and families who live in our community? **(Outcome)**
- Step 2: What would these conditions look like if we could see **(experience)** them?
- Step 3: How can we measure these conditions? **(Indicators)**
- Step 4: How are we doing on the most important measures? **(Baselines)**
- Step 5: Who are the **partners** that have a role to play in doing better?
- Step 6: **What works** to do better, including no-cost low-cost ideas?
- Step 7: What do we propose to do? **(Action Plan)**

Alternatively the chart on page five can be used to illustrate the process.

Outcomes based decision making Getting from Talk to Action

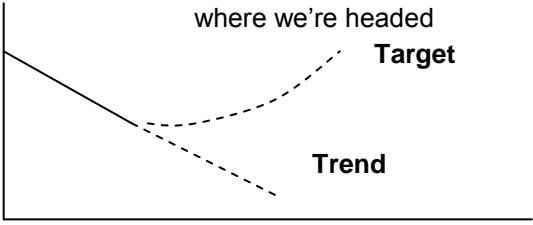
Population: e.g. under 5's



Outcome: e.g. Children enter school healthy and ready to learn
What we want for children in plain language



—————> Plus how we experience the result

<p>Indicators: (Measures of the result)</p> <p>1----- 2----- 3----- 4-----</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plus data development agenda</p>	<p>Baselines: Where we have been and where we're headed</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">Target</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Trend</p>
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—————> Plus a cost of bad results analysis

Story behind the baselines:
The causes, the forces at work; the epidemiology of the baselines

Plus Information & Research Agenda Part 1



Partners with a role to play:
Public and private sector agencies and individuals



What works ➔
What would it take to turn the curve,
best practices, best hunches

Plus information and research agenda part 2

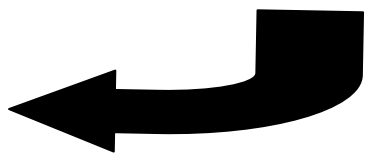
Criteria
Could include

Specificity: Can it be done? who, what, when, where, how

Leverage: power to turn the curve

Values: consistent with community values

Reach: Is it feasible and affordable



Strategy, Action Plan and Budget
What we propose to do: multi-year action plan and budget
How the "what works" pieces fit together.

Performance Measures: Measures of how well programs, services, supports, agencies and service systems included in the action plan, are working: How much did we do? How well did we do it? Is anyone better off?

Friedman 2005 'Trying Hard is Not Good Enough.'

Population Accountability Talk to Action 2

The following example uses the performance indicators from the City of York Children and Young People's Plan.

Population: All children and young people in the City of York

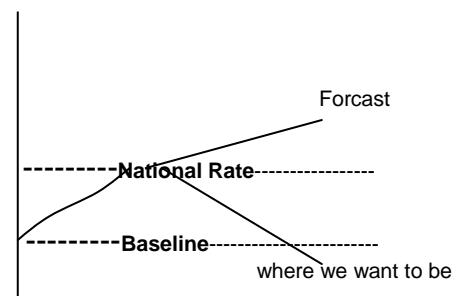
Outcomes: A "healthy start in life" for children and young people in York or use the Every Child Matters Outcomes.

Indicators: (*measures*)

1. NI112 The under 18 conception rate;
2. CYP2.1 Percentage of schools achieving the health schools standard;
3. NI 55 The rate of obesity among primary school children in reception year;
4. NI 56 The rate of obesity among primary school children in year 6;
5. NI 57 The percentage of children and young people (aged 5-19) participating in at least 5 hours of high quality PE and sporting opportunities per week.

Baselines for each indicator eg. Show history and forecast on current effort level (*where we have been , where we are headed*)

E.G. 1. NI112 Teenage Pregnancy



For each indicator identify:

Story behind the baselines

- What are the reasons behind this
- Other forces at work

Partners with a role to play

-
-

What works

What do we know that has been proven to work:

- Research
- Best practice
- Innovation and creativity
- What we could implement now (low cost and no cost ideas)

Action Plan who (actions by different partners), what ,budget, → Commissioning

The Report Card

Once a set of outcomes and indicators has been developed an annual report card should be developed. The report card is a tool to provide information to partners and local people on how children and young people are progressing across the city.

A “Healthy Start In Life” for children and young people in York

Indicators:

1. NI 112: The under 18 conception rate.

2. CYP 2.1: % of schools achieving the healthy schools standard

3. NI 55: The rate of obesity among primary school children in reception year

4. NI 56: The rate of obesity among primary school children in year 6

5. NI 57: The percentage of children and young people (aged 5-19) Participating in at least 5 hours of high quality PE and sporting opportunities per week

The Story Behind the Curve/Trend	Accomplishments	Recommendations/Action
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.
4.	4.	4.
5.	5.	5.

Performance Accountability

Performance accountability is about the role of managers and how well programmes are working. The basic principle is that most managers know their service/programme well and can identify the three to five most important measures, explain how the service/programme is doing on those measures and present what can be done to improve performance.

There are three performance measure categories:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	How Much did we do?	How Well Did we do it?
Effect	# How hard did we try?	% What change did we produce?

- | Quantity | Quality |
|---|---------|
| Quantity of effort: How much service was provided? | |
| Quality of effort: How well was the service provided? | |
| Quantity of effect: How many customers are better off? | |
| Quality of effect: What percent of customers are better off and how are they better off? | |

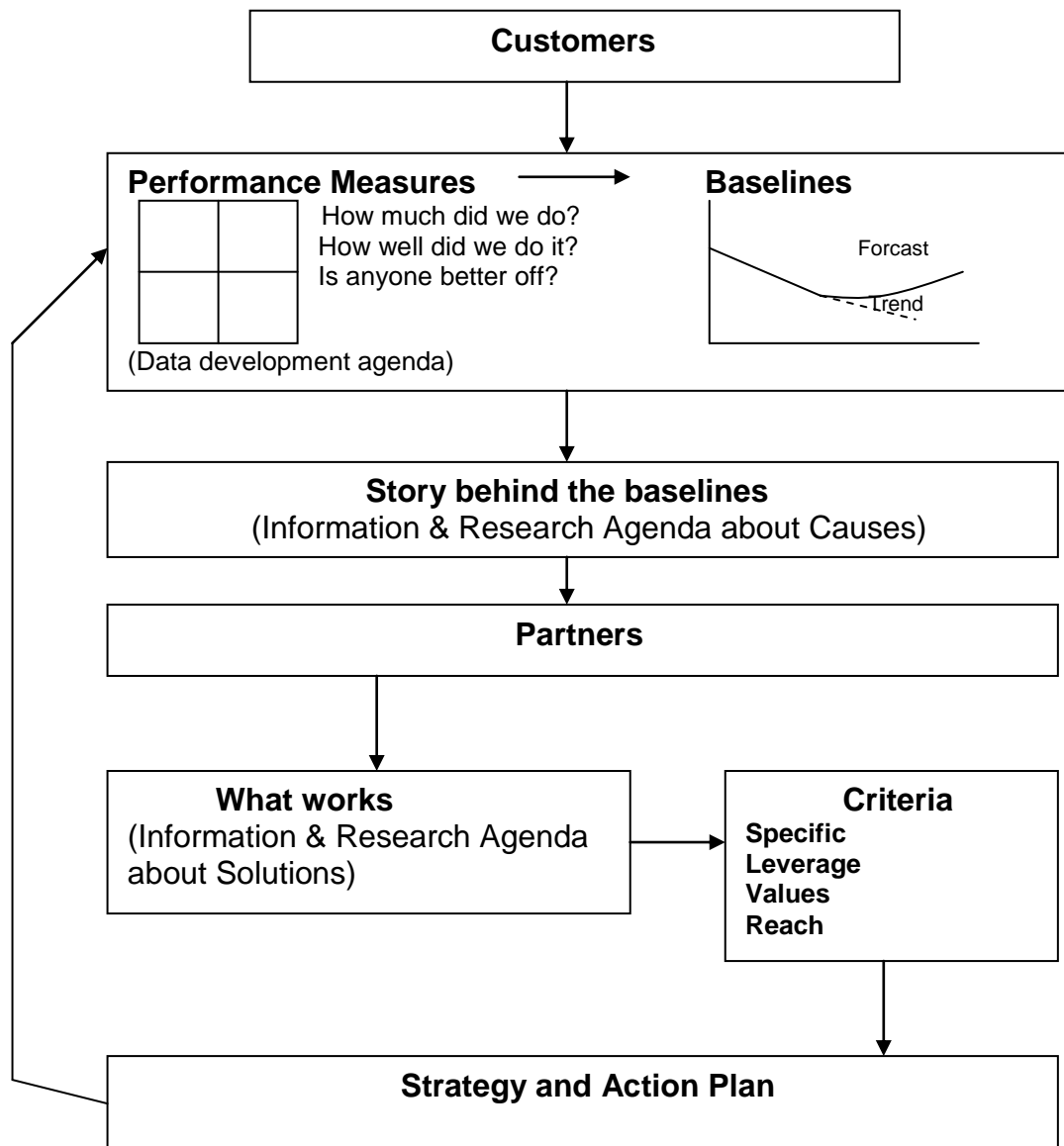
<u>How much did we do?</u>	<u>How well did we do it?</u>
# Customers served	% Common measures (e.g. workload ratio)
# Activity delivered	% Activity specific measures (e.g.) customers completing the activity)
<u>Is anyone better off?</u>	
# Skills/Knowledge	% Skills improved
# Attitude/opinion	% Attitude/opinion improved (including customer satisfaction)
# Behaviour	% Behaviour improved
# Circumstance	% circumstance improved

Friedman suggests that 7 key questions should be asked and answered on a regular basis.

1. Who are our customers?
2. How can we measure if our customers are better off?
3. How can we measure if we are delivering services well?
4. How are we doing on the most important of these measures?
5. Who are the partners that have a role to play in doing better?
6. What works to do better, including no- cost and low cost ideas
7. What do we propose to do?

Alternatively use the chart below to illustrate the process.

Performance Accountability - Getting from Talk to Action



Performance should be reviewed on a regular basis using the seven performance accountability questions. 'Customer results contribute to population results. What we do for our customers is our contribution to the quality of life of the community'.