

# Outcomes

**Definition:** Outcomes are Changes / Results / Impacts – generally focused on people, but it could be a program or institutional change, too.

**Key questions:**

- Who is the target group for whom you are writing outcomes? (i.e., Who do you think will be making a change?)
- What is the change you expect to see in the target group? (i.e., Types of changes include knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, or status changes)

It is important to distinguish between program services (also known as activities or as outputs) and program outcomes. Program services generally are worded in terms of what the program will provide. Conversely, program outcomes generally are worded in terms of how the participants will benefit. One way to check yourself is to check your grammar...The subject of a program outcome generally should be the participant, not the program or program staff.

Service-Focused Example:  
*Demographers will provide Mission Directors with demographic information about their community.*

Participant-Focused Example:  
*Mission Directors will make informed decisions about new area ministries.*

Outcome statements indicate the intended changes in participants. What change do we expect? To generate ideas, here are some possible types of changes...

<u>Type of Change:</u>	<u>Example:</u>
<i>Change in knowledge</i>	<i>Mission directors will be aware of changing community demographics</i>
<i>Change in skills</i>	<i>Mission Directors will make informed decisions regarding congregational new starts and redevelopments</i>
<i>Change in attitude</i>	<i>Youth are more aware that "There is a place for me" in their congregations</i>
<i>Change in behavior</i>	<i>Youth become more active members of their congregation</i>
<i>Change in status</i>	<i>Program users transition from unemployment to employment</i>
<i>Maintenance</i>	<i>Continue to live safely at home</i>
<i>Prevention</i>	<i>Program participants will not use drugs</i>

Programs may (and often do) have more than one outcome. Initial, or short-term outcomes, lead to other long-term outcomes.

Applying the “So what? / So that...” test can help you move from a service-focused statement to a short-term program outcome statement to a long-term program outcome statement.

So What? / So that... Example:

- *DRE will provide outcomes training to core team leaders.* (Really, this a service-focused statement.) So what or so that... ?
- *Core team leaders will be better equipped to create program outcome statements for the purposes of strategic planning.* (A short-term program outcome.) So what or so that... ?
- *Strategic planners will have outcomes that can be used to direct and measure the work of the churchwide office.* (Again, more of a service-focused statement.) So what or so that... ?
- *The work of the churchwide office will be more focused, more efficient, and more effective.* (A long-term program outcome.)

STRONG OUTCOMES are...

Clearly worded      Well-defined      Short and Long-term      Visionary!

## Outcome Indicators

**Definition:** Outcome indicators identify what is being measured that will track the progress on a given outcome. Outcome indicators are OBSERVABLE and MEASURABLE.

**Key questions:**

Outcome indicators help to answer the questions of...

- How will I know if/when the outcome is achieved?
- How is success defined?
- What is an indicator that will show that what I expected to happen is really happening?

For example: If the outcome is to ‘change a participant’s attitude,’ then the outcome indicators might be specific actions/behaviors that participants take that would be expected to accompany a change in attitude.

There are many ways to gather the information necessary for measuring the progress of an outcome – both Quantitative and Qualitative. Ideas include:

- Participant surveys/questionnaires/evaluation forms (both pre- and post-project)
- Interviews                      -Focus Groups                      -Data Collection                      -Observation