

## NWOG List of critical issues

### 1. value added – how does office save costs

USA 40k to start litigation

Employee retention

Prevent police suicide

Expedient justice

In OO setting, studies show that 1 spent can up to 9.50 down stream costs

Other forms of DR averted

Value of ombudsmanship is preserving relationship – customers, students, program users etc retained

### 2. best practices – modeling

First best practice – sorry Nike – Just do it!!!

Develop long term plan – RMAF

Reporting

Repeatable

Over rime

Understand the why – Q4

### 3. metrics

- No two ombudsman operations are exactly the same. Qualifiers such as the method of gathering and maintaining statistics, historic age of the operation, reputation of the incumbent, outreach activities, legal frameworks, and frequency of reporting all impact on the veracity of the comparisons.
- No two ombudsman complaints are exactly the same. A review and report on an unfair governmental system may take years of investigation and reporting as well as the attention of multiple staff members. A referral to an outside source may be repeated often, and at the front line of the organisation. Both of these file activities would have a

similar statistical weighting—a file closed by the ombudsman. A cautionary note is for the ombudsman to attempt to have the most rational comparisons possible.

- Ombudsmen should compare their operations with similar operations. These would include operations of similar classification (classical to classical, organisational to organisational), size (of the client audience and resources), and mandate (university to university, bank to bank).
- Complaint volumes may be tied to outreach activities and topical events. The presence or absence of which may increase or reduce activity.
- It is also important to consider the complexity of the investigation activity or the subject matter of the complaints being used in the statistical comparison.
- Comparisons can be made on a number of lines:
  - Raw numbers of staff, complaints, and resources
  - Files per staff member
  - Cost per file
  - Cost per file per staff member
  - Activities in respect of each file or file type
  - Processes used
  - Demographic profiles
  - Compliance with recommendations

#### 4. benefit from an assessment

The big “why” question

- *Demonstrating Value:* The evaluation process helps to demonstrate that the ombudsman’s office provides value to the government, organisation or entity; not only with economic savings, but also by improving systems and enhancing the organisation’s reputational value.
- *Is it working?:* By developing and using an evaluation strategy the ombudsman’s office can demonstrate that it is competently delivering its program and discharging its mandate.
- *What can be improved?:* By using a methodical evaluation process, the ombudsman may learn if there are issues, processes, connections, values, or orientations which could or should be improved.
- *What are the existing strengths?* Through the evaluation process practitioners are enabled to underline those successes which both the ombudsman and the organisation, as a whole, can draw upon.

- *Ensuring service standards:* The evaluation process allows practitioners to see whether the ombudsman is operating a professional program which meets professional standards.
- *Demonstrate integrity:* A methodical evaluation process which is both open and transparent, including an out-reporting strategy demonstrates the integrity of both the office and the assessment process.10F10F
- The Ombudsman can use the evaluation process to document the need for changes to its mandate, budget, programs, or staffing levels.
- In addition to these reasons the host agency, government, or corporation may wish to evaluate the Office of the Ombudsman to consider the retention of the incumbent

5. critical overview of approaches to assessment

Fair, honest, accurate  
 Established evaluation plan  
 Understandable and relevant criteria  
 Use of outside evaluation experts  
 Evaluation tied to comparative analysis  
 Multi faceted analysis

6. limited resources

Self evaluation tools  
 You already did this by completing the survey – 50 questions for self evaluation  
 Use of students – externs  
 Evaluations to be done over time  
 Cheap tools  
 Survey Monkey  
 Follow the RMAF

7. creating a successful assessment plan

The RMAF model exists  
 Start with something simple like the logic model

## 8. Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Why this question?

I have no idea how such a constitutional document would apply, except for an Ombudsman appointed under the charter.

An evaluation question for a particular office may be something does the Ombudsman's office embody the principles of rights established in the Charter??

## 9. accountable while still maintaining the independence and impartiality of the office

Yes, the evaluation process should strengthen these

Talk about processes not cases

DND Ombudsman brochure on demonstrating value

The 50 questions self test

The literature review implies some reasons for that gap:

- boundaries of independence; that there may be a perception that an ombudsman's independence may be challenged or fettered by an external review;
- the nature of evaluating fairness, a concept which have different meaning, values, and interpretations in varying jurisdictions or different ombudsman schemes; and
- that ombudsmen do not typically rely on performance plans, but rather on complaints to determine caseload volume and intensity. This reactive operational approach makes evaluation more difficult than in traditional results or performance based organizations.

## 10. audiences for assessment

First, you need to answer the why question 4 above

The reporting strategy is a vital component of the RMAF. There may be multiple stakeholders who have an interest in all or some portion of the evaluation of an ombudsman's office. It is therefore important to develop a reporting or communications strategy which determines who is to receive evaluation reports, when they are provided, and for what purpose. Reporting may be through press releases, annual reports, web postings, blog postings, workshops,

brochures, or other publications. Bear in mind that because evaluation may be used to consider retaining incumbents, readjustment of budgets or staffing levels, or identifying performance or systems strengths and weaknesses, a reporting strategy is critical. As it is a regular and usual ombudsman function to provide an annual report to the entity it oversees, this becomes a natural vehicle to also report on evaluation initiatives. Formative or mid-term evaluations are normally conducted and reported on in the second to third year of operation, while final or summative evaluations are conducted and reported on in year five.

#### 11. priorities and pitfalls

See number four above Know why you are evaluating first  
Not having an idea why you are evaluating  
Not creating benchmarks  
Not following the RMAF plan  
Not knowing the audience  
Not understanding the comparators

#### 12. assessments used to effect improvements and changes

This should be a key outcome of the evaluation process  
Evaluation should help you to:  
    Figure out program weaknesses see 4 above  
    Look at comparators  
    Implicitly let you see opportunities for change  
    Provide evidence in the fight for scarce resources  
    An element of the evaluation should always be to look at alternative for program delivery as a reflective question, see questions developed in the RMAF

#### 13. measure 'success' when the majority of contact is providing disappointing information

For me this is a critical issue  
Annual reports are a great source to do this: include evaluation as a reported topic



14. Examples, examples, examples

[www.icannombudsman.org](http://www.icannombudsman.org)

program evaluation and management tab

50 questions

Client survey

Statistical comparison

RMAF

Presentations to the Board Audit Committee

DND Brochure

Check out the Annual reports – dissertation bibliography

15. Who to call

Very limited field

Does NWOOG want to do a course – perhaps sponsored with USOA – FCO?

Can call Frank for some info as his schedule permits

Contract with John Zinsser

26 Mary Street, Suite A

Charleston, SC 29403

United States of America

(240) 401-8742

[jzinsser@conflictbenefit.com](mailto:jzinsser@conflictbenefit.com)