



BOSTON'S LATIN QUARTER

CREATIVE EVALUATION STRATEGY

Addendum to the 2019 Cultural District Plan

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Prepared for

Hyde Square Task Force
City of Boston Mayor's Office of Arts & Culture
Latin Quarter Advisory Committee



This creative evaluation strategy was developed by MAPC Community Engagement specialist Carolina Prieto as part of the cultural district planning work completed by MAPC for the City of Boston and Hyde Square Task Force between August 2018 and August 2019. It was developed in consultation with Hyde Square Task Force and draws on the knowledge and experience of the MAPC Community Engagement Division.

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Creative Evaluation

Overview

Creative evaluation is focused on finding strategies that improve programming in a way that is engaging and easy for participants. Creative evaluation seeks to ensure that participants are able to participate fully and meaningfully while at the same time reducing the time it takes to provide that feedback. This strategy aims to work outside the normal realms of evaluation, such as paper surveys, and expand evaluation opportunities to other mediums and tactics.

The creative evaluation strategy for Boston's Latin Quarter (BLQ) is key to ensuring that district programming is engaging to the Afro-Latin community and reaches diverse audiences. The purpose of the evaluation strategy is to create a menu of ways that Hyde Square Task Force can implement inclusive and diverse evaluation formats. These practices will be strategically woven into events in a way that is unobtrusive and yields rich results and data collection.

Connecting to Boston's Latin Quarter

The creative evaluation strategy for Boston's Latin Quarter (BLQ) is key to ensuring that district programming is engaging to the Afro-Latin community and reaches diverse audiences.

Consistent creative evaluation provides a catalyst to push the work forward. This strategy supports values of Boston's Latin Quarter, particularly:

- storytelling,
- accessibility of space,
- promoting the Spanish language, and
- small-business support.

Testing the impact of these events leads to continual improvement and consistent creative interventions. These evaluation practices will not only hold the district accountable to the values and work plan laid out, it will also pave a path to its growth.

THE BASICS

WHAT IS IT?

A menu of evaluation tools to achieve inclusive evaluation and solicit feedback from diverse communities.

WHY USE IT?

To ensure that BLQ events engage the Afro-Latin community and connect to diverse audiences.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

These tools can be woven into events and communications to yield rich results and data collection.

WHEN SHOULD IT BE USED?

The tools can be applied **before**, **during**, and **after** an event.

Ideas and Inspiration

Creative evaluation techniques have been created and tested in many forms. From events, to recurring programming, to infrastructure, many elements comprise successful creative evaluation engagement activities. Below are examples of approaches that have been used by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in the past.

Event Polling

Event polling is a great way to get participant feedback and share information about a variety of topics to community members. At right is an image of a Facebook poll added to an event to draw out conversation about whom the organization could expect to attend the event and what likely participants wanted to get from their attendance. Responses were visualized in a dot format and used to inform the design of the event.



Figure 1. Example of Facebook polling used before an event to elicit information about expectations.

Spinning Wheel

A spinning wheel can be a low cost and effective way to gain an audience's attention around complex topic areas. Creating a game around content that is typically complex, or not often talked about in cultural events or programming, can provide a welcoming entry point and make content more accessible.

At right is an example where the spinning wheel was used to ask participants about their experience with different planning topic areas. This wheel included prompts related to open space, bodies of water and community events.

The spinning wheel is flexible and can also be used to ask people about what type of event they would want to see in the future, how to improve the event, or specific trivia questions about the current event (such as how many years it has been running). It is best to work with the event planners to align the questions on the spinning wheel with the content and goals for the event you are hosting.



Figure 2. Spinning wheel in action - used to ask about individuals' experience with different planning topics.

Partnerships

In order to make evaluation a sustainable practice, organizations and institutions in Boston's Latin Quarter can share the responsibility of making sure evaluation systems are in place before, during and after events. A variety of organizational partners will generate programming in Boston's Latin Quarter. Coordinating evaluation methods and approaches among the district's programming partners will allow Hyde Square Task Force and the Latin Quarter Advisory Committee to track the overall audience and impact for the cultural district. Potential partners that can make this evaluation a reality are identified below.

Hyde Square Task Force

As the managing partner for Boston's Latin Quarter cultural district, Hyde Square Task Force already implements an evaluation strategy for its programming including events and other activities. This creative evaluation strategy will strengthen the work that is in place.

Connolly Branch of the Boston Public Library

According to the Boston Public Library Compass: Strategic Plan, one of the library's principles is to be a user-centered resource whose services "anticipate and respond to neighborhood interests." The creative evaluation strategy can be used by the Connolly Branch to assess how well library programming is meeting neighborhood interests and needs. As the managing partner of the Latin Quarter, HSTF can help with outreach for and evaluation of library programming serving Latinx residents to help both the library and the cultural district track impact. The Library can also provide a location to share information about district activities and to collect physical copies of surveys for HSTF.

Hyde-Jackson Square Main Street

With a focus on creating a safe, vibrant business district in Hyde and Jackson squares, the Hyde-Jackson Square Main Street runs a number of public programs with creative elements in the Latin Quarter, including Teatro en el Parque and the annual Sidewalk Sale. HJSMS can use the creative evaluation strategy to evaluate this programming and other initiatives intended to improve accessibility and aesthetics in the district. These strategies can be used by HJSMS to share information about their work with the public and gather information to assess the impact of programming, services and accessibility.

Latin Quarter World's Fair

The Latin Quarter World's Fair was held on September 15, 2019. As a returning cultural community event, it can provides an annual opportunity to test creative engagement techniques and gather public feedback about district programming and branding.

Strategy Details

Below are strategies that address evaluation of events before, during and after. Multiple strategies can be used during an engagement activity in order to provide a more complete evaluation of why people are drawn to an event and how people felt at the event/ activity. Use these strategies over time in order to evaluate how you are improving as you make changes to the events.

BEFORE AN EVENT

Using evaluation before the event allows you to understand the audience that you are attracting. Evaluation can enhance efforts to increase excitement and create a sense of understanding for what they can expect from you, your organization, and the event.

1. **Pre-event polling:** As you conduct outreach for an event, ask people to answer a few key questions prior to their attendance. This can be done as you ask people to RSVP so that you can collect data one time. Questions can include pertinent information such as – “What made you excited about reserving a spot at our event?” or “What group are you most excited to see perform?” You can ask demographic questions as well.
2. **Event posts:** Event posts on the events page of an event is a great way to get your audience to interact with you before an event in order to build buzz and excitement. This can be showcasing who will be at the event; performers and speakers create buzz and an opportunity for people to understand what to expect at the event. Pictures and quotes are a great way to do this. Some evaluation metrics can be added in order to see what it is about your event that people are specifically drawn to/interested in. You can ask questions like “How excited are you for Alex Chimis? What performer are you most excited for?” etc.
3. **Measuring Partnerships:** Tracking event partnerships from sponsorships, artist involvement, in-kind contributions, volunteers, or other involvement can help evaluate the impact of the event on the organization and building local capacity. It is important to track both quantitative and qualitative responses to understand the full impact of partnerships.

Sponsorship Partnerships

For each sponsor:

- What was the dollar value of the sponsorship?
- For how many years has the sponsor supported your event?
- What is the sponsor most interested in funding?
- What does the sponsor require or receive in return for sponsorship?
- What is the status of your relationship with the sponsor?
- What value have you provided to other partners due to the sponsorship?

For sponsors in aggregate:

- What is the total number of sponsors for the event?
- How has it changed over the last 3-5 years?
- What is the total dollar value of sponsorships for the event?
- How has it changed over the last five years?
- What sponsorship opportunities are attracting the most sponsors?
- The fewest sponsors?
- What opportunities are attracting the largest sponsorship amounts?
- The smallest?
- What has been the cumulative impact of sponsorships? What value has it allowed you to provide through the event?

Artist Partnerships

Questions	Tracking Method
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many events involved a partnership with the artist? • How is the artist expanding your reach through their networks and audiences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count of events. • Include a question on event evaluation surveys that asks, “How did you hear of this event?” • List the artist name/brand among the answer options.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has the organization expanded the artists’ audience, portfolio, skillset, or network? • Did artist involvement facilitate any other new partnerships? Which ones? How did that happen? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use exit survey or exit interview to evaluate artist partnership. • Use exit survey or exit interview to evaluate artist partnership.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can relationships with new partners be sustained after artist involvement ends? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conversation with partners during artist involvement.

In-Kind Contribution Partnerships

- What is the total monetary value of the in-kind contributions?
- What expertise has the in-kind contribution been able to provide?
- What in-kind contributions require additional funding to be sustained?
- How is the event showcasing the value of in-kind contributions?

Volunteer Partnerships

Tracking Volunteer Participation and Satisfaction

- How many volunteers are needed for each event?
- How many volunteers participate in multiple events?
- How many volunteers participate annually across all events and activities?
- How do you acknowledge or celebrate volunteers and their contributions?
- How satisfied are volunteers with their involvement?

Tracking Organizational Impact

- How much staff time is spent on volunteer management?
- How much staff time is saved through volunteer contributions at each event?
- How much staff time is saved through volunteer contributions across all events?
- What is the cost of volunteer acknowledgements and celebrations?
- How does volunteer network support organization's mission and goals?

Organizational Partnerships

- How many years has this organization been a partner?
- What resources are shared through the organizational partnership (materials, staff time, equipment, etc.)?
- How does the partnership expand organizational capacity? (networks, programming, district management, development, etc.)
- What is the level of engagement with the partner organization?
 1. Information sharing: share information to their constituents.
 2. Collaborator: Event planning partner with shared resources.

DURING AN EVENT

There are many ways to analyze how an event is going during the event itself. Visual, written, and verbal feedback can allow for assessment of how well your event is resonating with your audience. Together, these strategies yield a mix of qualitative and quantitative performance indicators that generate a clear picture of how well the event was promoted, the quality of the content and experience, and how to improve it for next time. Below are some specific tools.

Visual/Tactile Feedback Tools

1. **Attendance counts:** Use a clicker to count the number of people at your event. You can cross reference with large open style event sign-ins as sometimes people are not captured at sign in tables. Clickers are under \$20.
2. **Who's in the room:** Have attendees raise their hand if they fit certain identities so you can see who has attended your event. Some examples can include: "Raise your hand if: you live in Jamaica Plain, are visiting for the day, or this is the first time you are in Boston's Latin Quarter." Remember to document what you see from the "show of hands" activities. This includes new attendees, new attendees to the location, event type etc.
3. **Identity stickers:** Create name tags where participants can place identity stickers on their nametag. You can create a legend that is relevant to your needs and what you want to measure. You can use colorful dots to mean different identity markers. Count the number of stickers before and after the event to see how many of each were used. Compare the totals to the clicker/sign-in estimates.
4. **Refreshment tickets:** If you are having an event with refreshments, provide tickets to people when they sign into the event. When participants use the tickets to get refreshments, tickets can be counted at the end of the event to estimate participation and preferences for multiple food options. This also incentivizes event registration.
5. **Interactive voting:** Instead of having just a written evaluation form, you can collect feedback through



Figure 3. Attendance count clickers.



Figure 4. Example of icon legend for identity stickers on name tags.



interactive activities. Set up questions next to containers representing different answers. Let attendees vote for an answer using colorful poker chips. You can also use a digital polling program such as [poll everywhere](#) to gather quick feedback from participants.

Written Feedback Tools

1. ***Poster feedback:*** Posters can be set up at an event in order collect written feedback on specific ideas, topics, or questions. Posters are most effective with a facilitator but can also be left as a stand-alone display. Place the posters at eye level and set them up near areas of high foot traffic. You can use easels to set up if there is limited wall space.
2. ***In-person surveys:*** Have staff distribute surveys during the event. In order to create anonymity, you may ask attendees to drop their survey directly in a closed box. Distribution to individuals as they wait in lines for food or other activities may yield higher response rates. Providing activities to occupy children near a survey location may encourage parents to fill out surveys.
3. ***Icon scale surveys:*** Using icons like smiley faces or other images to get a quick read on how satisfied people are with an event can be a quick way to get feedback. This could be a tool to use with merchants during an event to find out whether they are experiencing more or less foot-traffic than usual and whether they are happy or unhappy with the event.

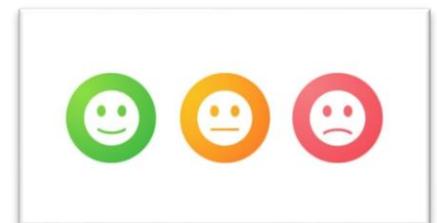


Figure 5. Example of emoji survey scale to measure satisfaction.

Verbal Feedback Tools

1. **Wheel of questions:** Customize a spinning wheel as a fun way to talk about your plans for future events and feedback on the event of the day. Different questions can be placed on different segments of the wheel.
2. **Verbal temperature check:** Pick a time during the event where a verbal temperature check is appropriate. This may be at the middle of the event, during an intermission, or as you transition to another part of the agenda. The event facilitator can mention things like “Can I get a whoop if you are having fun?” This can also be a way to unite the event attendees and make people feel engaged in the space.
3. **One-on-one rapid conversations:** Have staff go around to the event attendees and ask a few questions: “Are you having fun?” “Is there anything that you would change about the event?” Have the staff take personal notes after these interactions to be able to share with the other staff at a later time. This feedback should be combined with anonymous feedback. Participants are less likely to share negative feedback during one-on-one conversations.

AFTER AN EVENT

1. **24 hour survey:** If you collected emails at your registration table, send a follow up email with an event survey no later than 24 hours after your event. This timeline is the best in order to get the best possibility of response. The survey can be the same as the survey that was distributed during the event.
2. **Event photos and video:** 24 hours after the event you should post photos and video of the event. It is good to feature the event content and what happened right away so people can see what they missed and encourage them to attend the next event. This post can include and ask for participants to tag friends, family and colleagues. This will provide more opportunity for others to see the information as well.
3. **Social Media Mentions:** Staff should review the social media mentions of your event. You can measure engagement, reach, shares and posts on event pages like Facebook.



Other important tips!

1. **Timely analysis:** Analyze the feedback you received as soon as possible. Instruct staff assigned to implementing feedback tools to type up notes and enter feedback into spreadsheets immediately after the event.
2. **Debrief meeting:** Schedule a post-event debrief meeting with event staff before the event happens so you already have designated time to report out on event execution and evaluation results. Present clear instructions to staff for what to bring to the meeting including typed up notes from verbal, written, and visual feedback tools. Use debrief to share observations on what went well, what did not go well, and key themes emerging from the feedback – did the event reach its intended audience? Where was activity concentrated? What were people excited about?
3. **Act on the results:** Share the knowledge learned from events with staff and partners. Develop a shared manual for best practices. A bulleted list is a great way to start.
4. **Provide training on evaluation:** Review the creative evaluation strategy with youth and volunteers and train them on how to interact and respond with participants. Develop simulations where volunteers can practice one-on-one rapid conversations, survey skills and running activities like the wheel of questions. Use evaluation strategy to train youth and volunteers on data collection and analysis. Invite youth and volunteers to participate in event debriefs and share their perspectives and takeaways.