Places Where Foods Are Sold: Steps to Conducting Your Long-Term Outcome Evaluation

You can use **point-of-sale, production,** and/or **procurement** data to obtain long-term outcomes to evaluate your food service guidelines initiative in places where foods are sold. Use the following steps as a guide for your evaluation.

1. **Determine the availability of point-of-sale, procurement, or production data in facilities where food service guidelines are being implemented.**

   a. Meet with facility managers to determine how data are currently captured. Are the data available electronically or only in paper records? How far back in time can data records be obtained to allow for baseline (pre-intervention) measurement? Is the information collected the same across time? How easily can records from each food distributor source be obtained?

   b. If food service guidelines are being implemented in multiple facilities, determine which facilities can more feasibly provide relevant data that will be useful for long-term evaluation. Focus your long-term evaluation efforts on these facilities.

2. **Obtain convenience samples of available point-of-sale, procurement, and production data from the facility manager.** These can be the most recent records or records that are easily obtained. These data will be used in Step #3 to assess the potential utility of available data sources.

3. **Establish a set of potential measures of healthy and less healthy food and beverage categories that correspond with specific nutrition standards being implemented.** To determine foods and beverages that can be easily differentiated as healthy or less healthy, examine the data records you obtained in Step #2. For example, if you wish to measure the impact of nutrition standards for healthy beverages, do beverage procurement records clearly differentiate purchases of bottles or cans of sugar-sweetened beverages from zero calorie beverages such as diet drinks or bottled water? If you wish to measure the impact of nutrition standards for whole grains, do bread procurement records clearly differentiate whole grain from refined grain bread products?

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4. **Select a limited set of food and beverage category measures for healthy and less healthy foods (as defined in your food service guidelines).**
    a. Measures that are selected should correspond well with specific nutrition standards.
    b. Measures that are selected should be based on data records that can be obtained relatively easily for the time period of interest.

5. **Obtain relevant point-of-sale, production, and/or procurement data records from the facility manager for the pre-intervention and post-intervention time periods.** Ensure long enough time periods are selected to ensure that repeating menu cycles and/or lags in procurement due to food storage are accounted for. Also obtain total sales volume data (total number of customer transactions, total number of all items sold to customers, or total sales revenue) for the pre-intervention and post-intervention time points. These data will be used to adjust analyses for changes in volume across time.

6. **Abstract data for relevant food and beverage category measures from point-of-sale, production, and/or procurement data.** Transcribe relevant data from records (for the measures you selected to assess) into a database.

7. **Analyze point-of-sale, production, and/or procurement data for each of your selected food and beverage category measures during pre-intervention and post-intervention periods.**
    a. Assess whether selected healthy foods or beverages increased in sales, procurement, or production from pre- to post-intervention.
    b. Assess whether selected unhealthy foods or beverages decreased in sales, procurement, or production from pre- to post-intervention.
    c. If possible, adjust analyses for changes in total sales volume. If sales are not adjusted, you cannot determine if changes in sales of specific food items are due to implementation of food service guidelines or due to changes in the number of people using the cafeteria over time.

8. **Use evaluation results to inform future adjustments to food service guidelines implementation such as implementing new behavioral design strategies or finding new healthy products or recipes to encourage increased sales.**