WAVE ANALYSIS PLANNING TOOL

HOW TO GET A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY – QUICK!
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Wave Analysis Planning Tool

Purpose

Wave Analysis is a participatory process to help a group analyse its current operating environment in order to plan realistically for the future.

It can be used for reviewing what's going on in your world in a way that prompts participants to consider new and innovative ways of operating, as well as thinking about 'old habits' that they may need to let go of.

It can be used for:
- Gathering data
- Reflection and analytical thinking
- Communicating the future direction of your group

Background

Wave Analysis is a timely alternative to the boring schmoring, done to death SWOT analysis. That was fine for the 1990's – but so was dial-up internet and four channels on your TV! It helps a group to look objectively at what they've been doing and to seriously consider some completely new ways of doing business.

It consists of four components:

i. *New Edges*. These are new ideas or concepts that we have not even thought of and could really shake our worlds. Currently, they're way out beyond the horizon, however within a few years – well, who knows!

ii. *Emerging Trends.* These are still experimental and are on the move. You see them where the wave is forming and gaining momentum

iii. *Established Norms* are the current, standard operating procedures that get us through our day, week, quarter, month and year. They are on the crest of the wave and keep us moving.

iv. *Dying Practices* are the things we just keep doing even though they're no longer relevant or outdated. We see them where the wave breaks on the shore and has lost its energy.

How to conduct a Wave Analysis exercise

Supplies

You'll need sticky notes (4 different colours would be ideal) and a clear wall, window or table space to put them.

Timing

It's best done as a participatory process and can be run in 20-60 minutes with 2-40 people.

Activity Flow

Introduction

- Identify the topic to be explored (e.g. volunteering capacity in rural communities)
- Draw a wave and introduce the dynamic nature of a wave
- Explain the wave metaphor:
  i. Way out on the horizon are the *New Edges* (radical, largely unknown)
  ii. Where the wave is forming are the *Emerging Trends* (experimental, gaining momentum)
  iii. On the crest of the wave are the *Established Norms* (current, standard operating procedures)
  iv. Where the wave breaks on the shore are the *Dying Practices* (no longer relevant, outdated)

Brainstorm

- Refer back to the topic (e.g. volunteering capacity in rural communities)
- Get participants, either individually or in small groups, to focus on *one* of the four components of the wave. Ask them to write down their ideas on the sticky notes – one per note.

New Edges	Emerging Trends	Established Norms	Dying Practices
Focus question			
What might be the new edges we'll see over the next five years re volunteering in rural communities?	What trends are you starting to see emerge re volunteering in rural communities?	What are some of the established norms around volunteering?	What dying practices should we reconsider or let go of?
Example			
Primary school kids run the local show	Visiting grey nomads offering their skills on regular basis	We're relying on their goodwill, so we can't impose rules or expectations upon them	Monthly, separate meetings for each club or group in town

- (Remember to use a different coloured sticky note for each category)
- Alternatively, you could ask them to instead generate ideas about the topic and then get them to identify where they fit in the 'wave'

Gather the data

- Ask participants to place their stick it notes in the appropriate category on the wall, window or table
- Read through each category and clarify ideas where needed – look for similarities and differences between ideas

Reflect and Next Steps

- Explore how one person's dying practice might be another's emerging trend
- Discuss how the ideas can be used
- Identify actions that the group can implement over the next three, six and twelve months.

Example topics:

- Developing leadership capacity beyond the usual suspects
- Sustainable funding for community groups
- Access to health services in rural communities
- The role of local government in regional Australia
- Attracting a new labour force beyond our cities

Wave Analysis Planning template

What's the <u>purpose</u> of running the Wave Analysis?

What <u>outcomes</u> do you hope the analysis will achieve?

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What's the <u>topic</u>?

What <u>group</u> are you running the Wave Analysis with?

What's your <u>focus question</u>?

<u>Process</u> (Identify what you want participants to do for each step below)

Brainstorm

Gather the data

Reflection

Wave Analysis Action Plan Template

	New Edges	Emerging Trends	Established Norms	Dying Practices
	Focus question			
	What might be the new edges we'll see over the next five years re volunteering in rural communities?	What trends are you starting to see emerge re volunteering in rural communities?	What are some of the established norms around volunteering?	What dying practices should we reconsider or let go of?
	Actions			
3 months				
Who				
6 months				
Who				
12 months				
Who				