

Introduction to the Most Significant Change (MSC) Technique

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Agenda

- Introductions – Who is in the Room?
- What is MSC?
- The Steps of MSC
- Why do we use MSC and When is it Beneficial?
- Examples of MSC
- Resources

What is the Most Significant Change Technique?

- Developed in 1995 by Rick Davies
- Participatory method of monitoring & evaluation (M&E)
- Involves story collection and systemic selection by participants
- Has also been called monitoring-without-indicators, the 'story' approach, impact monitoring, and evolutionary approach to organisational learning

Why Use MSC?

- Monitoring & Evaluation
- Capacity Building
- Learning
- Reporting



Steps of MSC Implementation

1. Start and raise interest
2. Establish 'domains' of change
3. Define the reporting period
4. Collect stories of change
5. Review the stories within the organizational hierarchy
6. Provide stakeholders with regular feedback about the review process
7. Set in place a process to verify the stories if necessary
8. Quantify
9. Conduct secondary analysis of the stories en masse
10. Revise the MSC process

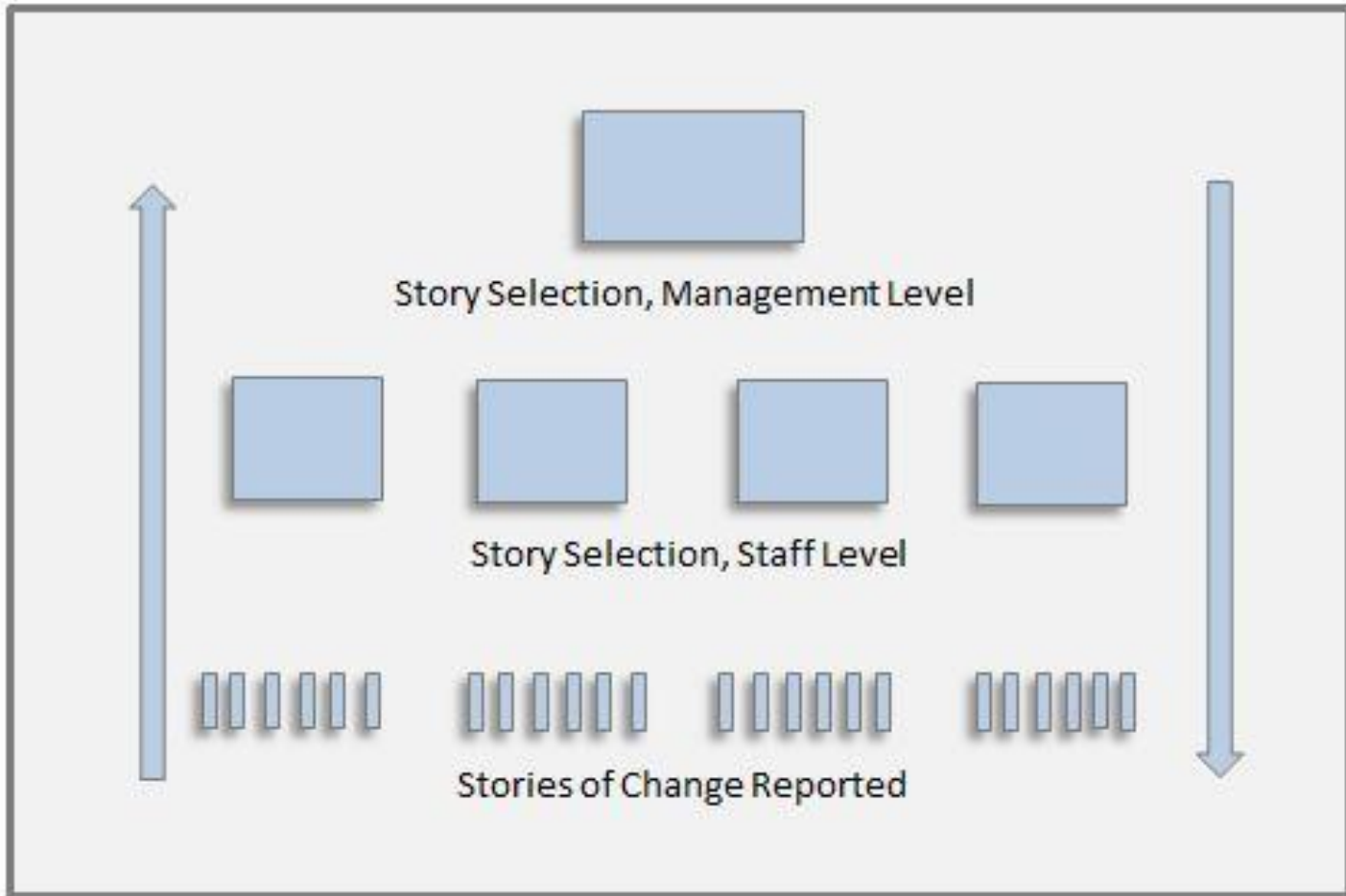
Establish Domains of Change

- Domains are “broad often fuzzy categories of possible SC stories.” (Rick Davies, 2005)
 - Deliberately ‘fuzzy’ to allow people to have different interpretations of what constitutes a change in that area
- Generally, domains focus on the change an individual undergoes
- The ‘open window’ domain
- Including ‘negative changes’
- Domains can be identified via a top-down or bottom-up approach, and do not need to be included at all depending on organizational needs

Collect Stories of Change

- What should be documented?
 - Information about who collected the story and when the events occurred
 - Description of the story itself – who was involved, what happened, where, and when
 - Significance (to the storyteller) of events described in the story
 - Headline or title (optional)
 - Recommendations or lessons learned (optional)

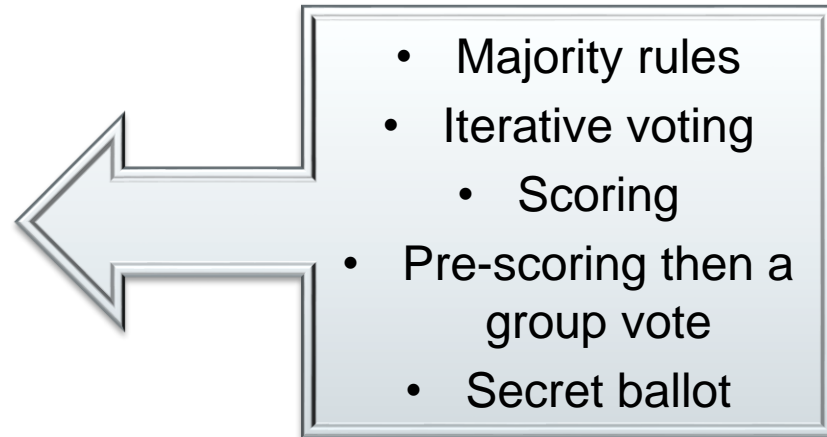
Select the Most Significant Stories



Select the Most Significant Stories

Key Ingredients of Story Selection:

- Everybody reads the story
- The group holds an in-depth conversation about which stories should be chosen
- The group decides which stories are felt to be most significant
- The reason for the group's choice(s) are documented



When to Use MSC?

Good for:

- Complex and produce diverse and emergent outcomes
- Large with numerous organisational layers
- Focused on social change
- Participatory in ethos
- Designed with repeated contact between field staff and participants
- Struggling with conventional monitoring systems
- Highly customised services to a small number of beneficiaries (such as family counseling)

When to Consider Other Options...

- When the organisation wants to capture an expected change
- In order to develop good news stories for public relations
- To conduct retrospective evaluation of a completed program
- To understand the average experience of participants
- To complete a quick and inexpensive evaluation

Examples of MSC Work

- Global Undergraduate Exchange Program in Eurasia and Central Asia
- Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders
 - USAID funded programming in Africa
 - Video of Mandela Washington Fellow's story of change

Thank You!

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Questions?

Resources

MSC GUIDE:

- http://betterevaluation.org/resources/guides/most_significant_change

MSC Review:

- <http://www.tools4dev.org/resources/the-most-significant-change-msc-technique-tool-review/>