Preface

Measurement of the realization of the intent of a service organization’s services is an art and not a science, with discovery of realization pegged to the array of evaluation techniques of outcomes measurement, where an outcome describes collected observations and data relative to a specific desirable result or quality of services, and with that which is discovered as being suggestive of what does and does not work. Thus, outcomes measurement generates guidance to the sponsoring organization through a focused audit that is intent on resolving observations and data to previously specified objectives.

The implementation of audit includes several limitations. First, its principal focus is on the durability of services through time, thus necessitating a time-wise disconnect between the actual delivery of services and the subsequent collection of observations and data. Second, there is the doubtful value of the collected observations and data as each has the potential to be an inseparable commingling of unrelated environmental factors with the true results of services at any point in time. Third, a subset of the observations and data may be a function of chance and not durability, and thus not a true indicator of what does and does not work. And fourth, there is the risk that a subset of the observations and data is a contrived representation and not a representation of fact and/or is not independently corroborable.

This book accepts the focus of outcomes measurement on durability as important to the comparison of observations and data to objectives, but that the focus is silent as to the underlying impetus to change that is in turn commingled with execution of the objectives. That outcomes measurement discovers the condition of observations and data versus objectives in the near term, but does not contribute to insight into the intricacies of delivery with respect to efficient, effective and time, or to an analysis of the long term where durability is clouded by uncertainty.

- Section 1 poses the challenge and its foundation to outcomes measurement. The challenge is that the relationship between time (and uncertainty) and collected observations and data (and free-form representations), through the scrutiny of repeatable, verifiable and auditable, must be folded into the practice of outcomes measurement if that process of discovery is to serve as a guiding light to the formation and execution of objectives. And, the foundation to the challenge is the parallel specification of an objective’s execution plan and scrutiny with respect to the resources necessary to efficiently support the plan, the effective deployment of the plan, and suppositions about when time morphs to a cloud of uncertainty.

- Section 2 sets the stage for the challenge by describing the stories about the lives of real people who have made contributions to society in one form or another, with the path that each has taken defying any insight that could have been gained from the current practice of outcomes measurement. Included here is a summary of the life of Abraham Lincoln the 16th President of the United States, and a composite story about a countless number of ordinary people who have and do endure the circumstance known as being homeless. The two stories are then folded into a composite story. The composite story is then about people who could have been addicted to believing that they are fundamentally wrong about their human-ness.

- Section 3 presents the characteristics of outcomes measurement from three views, with this discussion’s base the Government Performance and Results Act as passed by the United States Congress in 1993. The first view is the definition, objectives and the implementation of outcomes measurement. The second view is about the recognition and evaluation of evidence. And the third view is about scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.
Section 4 presents the characteristics of cost-benefit analysis from three views with this discussion’s base a sampling of GPRA-mandated performance reports, which affords the extension of this discussion of cost-benefit from only nominal costs and benefits, to a mix of nominal and non-quantitative social costs and benefits. The first view is the definition, objectives and implementation of cost-benefit with full recognition of the legal and social challenges to be resolved by classical economics. The second view is about the recognition and evaluation of evidence that emerges through the collected observations and data. And the third view is about scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.

Section 5 discusses the similarities between the characteristics of outcomes measurement and cost-benefit analysis from three views. The first view is the objectives and implementation of each. The second view is about the recognition and evaluation of evidence that emerges through the collected observations and data. And the third view is about scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.

Section 6 discusses the differences between the characteristics of outcomes measurement and cost-benefit analysis from three views. The first view is the objectives and implementation of each. The second view is about the recognition and evaluation of evidence that emerges through the collected observations and data. And the third view is about scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.

Section 7 discusses what subset of the collected observations and data are allowable to be considered evidence from three views, with the discussions in Sections 3 and 4 the base. The first view is about the recognition and evaluation of evidence. And the second view is about scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.

Section 8 discusses the relationship between the Composite Story of Section 2.4 to the characteristics of empirical evidence of Section 6 from the perspective of scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.

Section 9 presents the characteristics of cost-benefit analysis from three views with this discussion’s base a thematic proposition about the relationship between cost and an incalculable uncertainty. The first view is the definition, objectives and implementation of cost-uncertainty. The second view is about the recognition and evaluation of evidence that emerges through the collected observations and data. And the third view is about scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.

Section 10 discusses the relationship between the Composite Story of Section 2.4 to the characteristics of uncertainty of Section 9 from the perspective of scrutiny, its objectives and implementation, and its relationship to time and evidence.

Thus, outcomes measurement is strongly supportive of the analysis of results at the macro level, but silent about the intricacies of what does and does not work between any underlying impetus to change, the efficient implementation of the objectives, and the efficient pursuit of the intent of the objectives.

This book examines the importance of extending the focus of outcomes measurement to the relationship between efficient, effective and durability, and as being a contribution to the creation of a set of generally accepted standards of the conduct of outcomes measurement that in turn is a durable identifier of what does and does not work beginning with the underlying impetus to change.