

# Measure What's Meaningful: Strategies for Using Data

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disABILITYsa Food For Thought Webinar

May 21, 2020

11:30 a.m.



# Plan for Today

- I. General Overview: The Why, What, and How of Measurement
- II. Data in the Time of COVID: Data Strategies Amidst Uncertainty

**Please stop me anytime and ask questions throughout**

# Why Do We Measure?



- To **Advertise**: share our impact with funders and partners to maintain and expand programming



- To **Report**: track our progress with funded programming and remain in good standing



- To **Improve**: learn from our results and make adjustments to programming to increase value for clients

# What Do We Measure?

## Inputs

- What your agency offers

## Outputs

- Participation in activities
- “How Many”

## Outcomes

- Impact of participation
- “Better Off”

# Outcome Statements

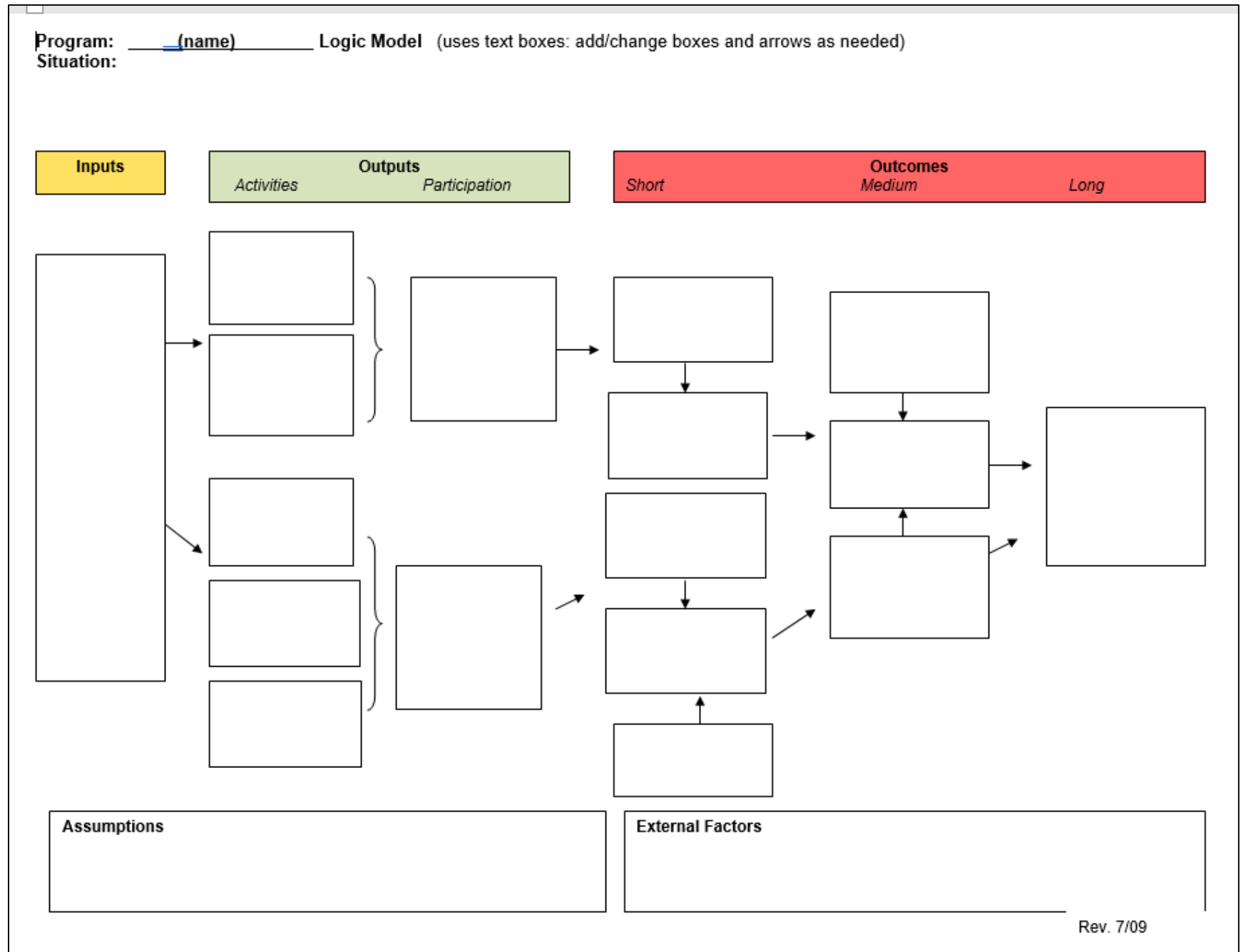
What you want to make true for your clients by virtue of their participation in your program/agency.

Should be specific, measurable, and realistic.

Measure changes in clients' knowledge, behavior, attitudes and/or skills.

*Because of their participation in our agency, our clients will\_\_\_\_\_.*

A **Logic Model** helps you and your team understand what impact you expect to have and how it gets achieved.



# What “Counts” as Data?

- Anything that informs you about how your program is operating
- Data can come in numerical and non-numerical forms

	Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
<b>Description</b>	Numbers, counts, measurements with units	Words, observations, and descriptions
<b>Sources</b>	Surveys Test results Sign-in sheets and rosters	Interviews & open-ended surveys Staff observation Event description
<b>Examples</b>	Number of attendees % of students passing STAAR Average satisfaction rating	Client’s explanation of choice Parent feedback email Staff description of contractor quality

# Putting Data Together to Understand Our Programs

- Use Quantitative + Qualitative data together to get a more comprehensive picture of how our programs are doing
- Sometimes called a “mixed methods” approach to analysis

Quantitative Analysis	Qualitative Analysis
Helps us see patterns in how our clients and programs are doing that we might not otherwise be able to detect	Gives more context and nuance to the numerical findings
Helps us understand patterns in <b>what</b> is happening across a relatively large group of people	Helps us understand <b>why</b> we observe the patterns we do



# The Counterfactual

- What happens when we **don't** measure?
  - “Eyeballing” and “rough estimates” are unreliable at best and damaging at worst if we make too many assumptions from them
  - Our measurement will never be error-free...but we can reduce systematic errors by sticking to an evaluation plan that –
    - Measures outcomes we have all agreed are relevant and important for our work
    - Captures the perspective and experiences of as many of our clients as possible

# Quantitative Analysis – the **What**

- Key thing to remember in analyzing our quantitative data – all numbers are **relative** and that meaning comes from **comparison**
- We can draw meaningful conclusions about how our programs are doing by comparing findings --



## Over Time

Time 1 to Time 2

Ex: April to May or Pre to Post



## Across Place

Location A to Location B

Ex: Sunnyville Campus to Lakeside Campus



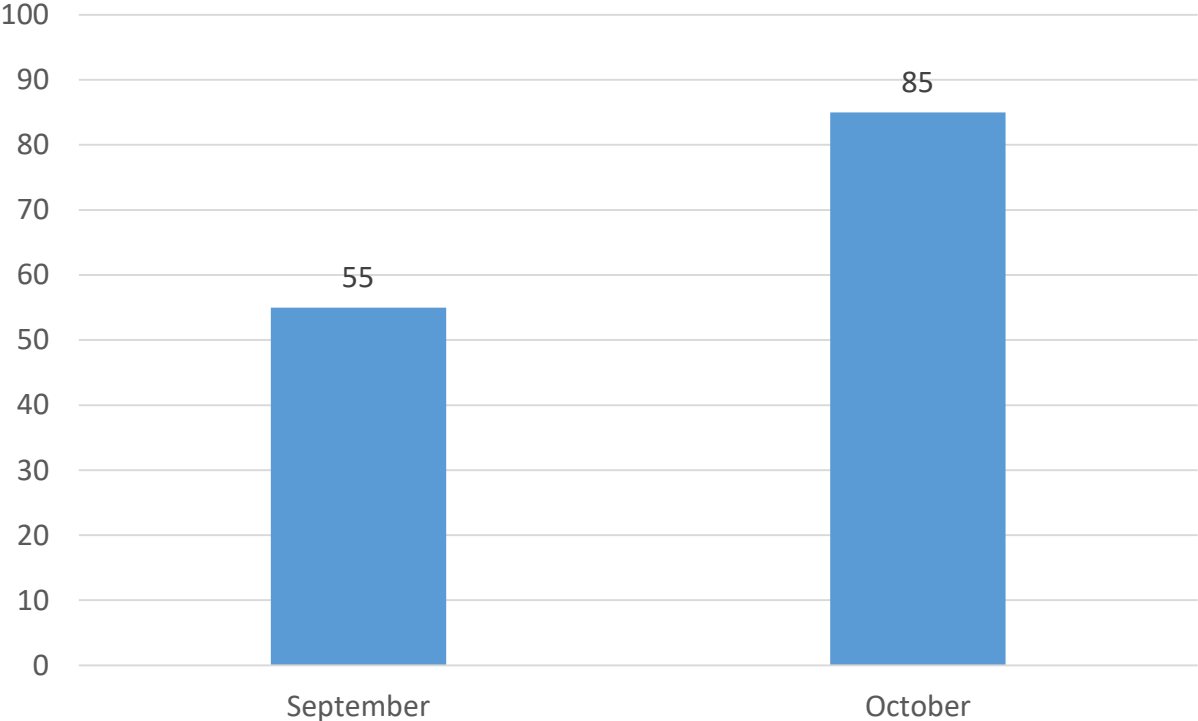
## By Subpopulation

Client group to Client group

Ex: Mothers to Fathers or Latinx Students to White Students

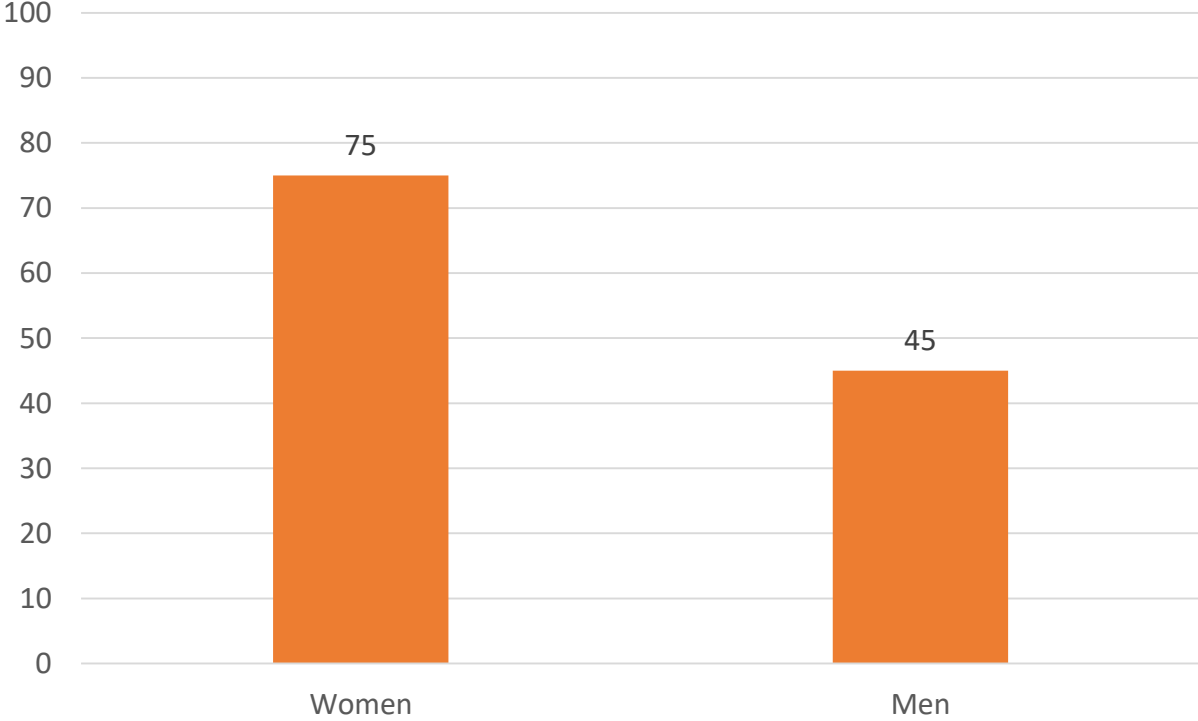
# Example: Client Satisfaction

% Clients Reporting “Very Satisfied” with Services, by Month



Sept: % Very Satisfied	Oct: % Very Satisfied	Difference
55%	85%	+ 30 % pts

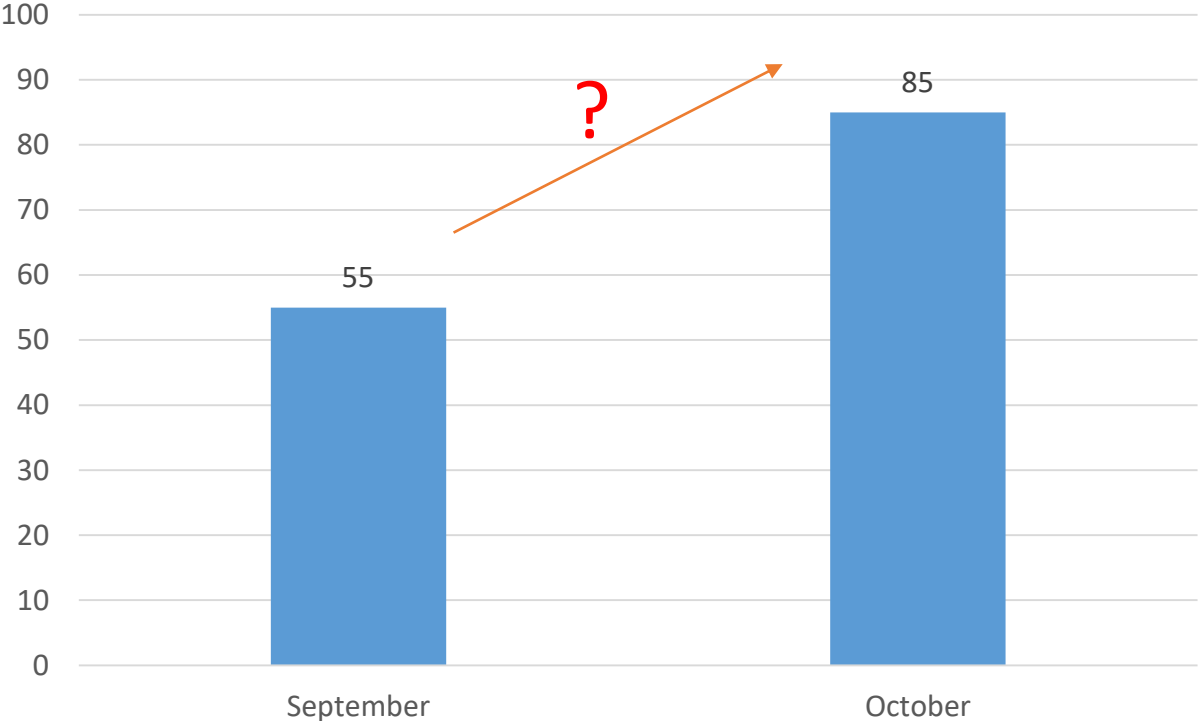
% Clients Reporting “Very Satisfied” with Services, by Gender



Women: % Very Satisfied	Men: % Very Satisfied	Difference
75%	45%	-- 30 % pts

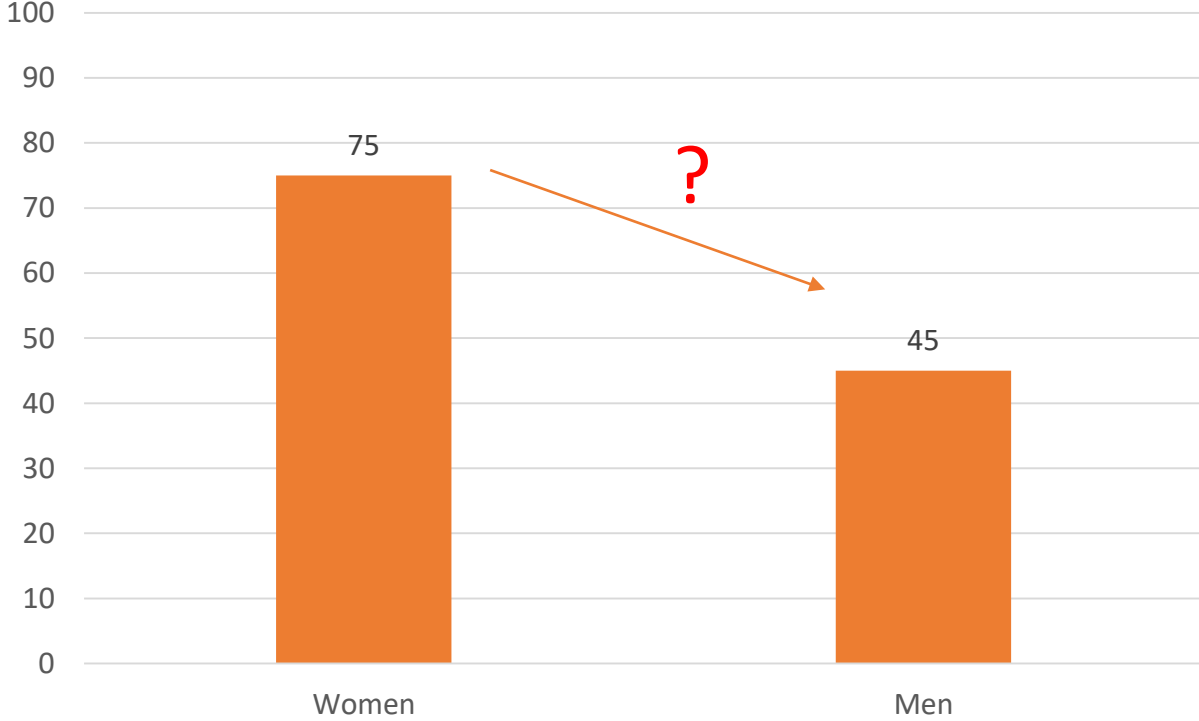
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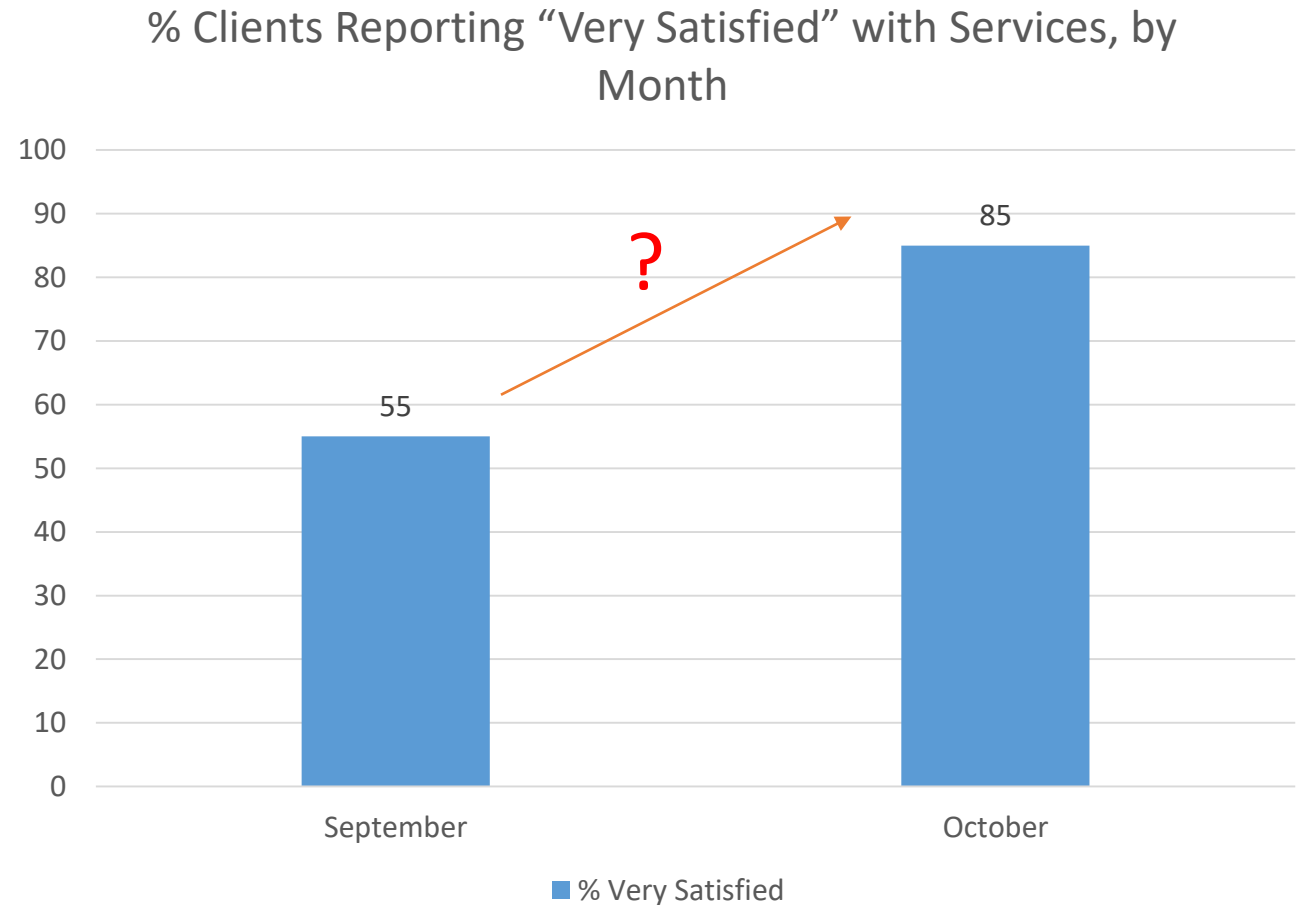
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# Qualitative Analysis – the **Why**

After calculating the difference between the two points, reflect on **why** the numbers changed (or didn't) in the way they did (or didn't).

Bring in qualitative (non-numerical) data to help understand the change.

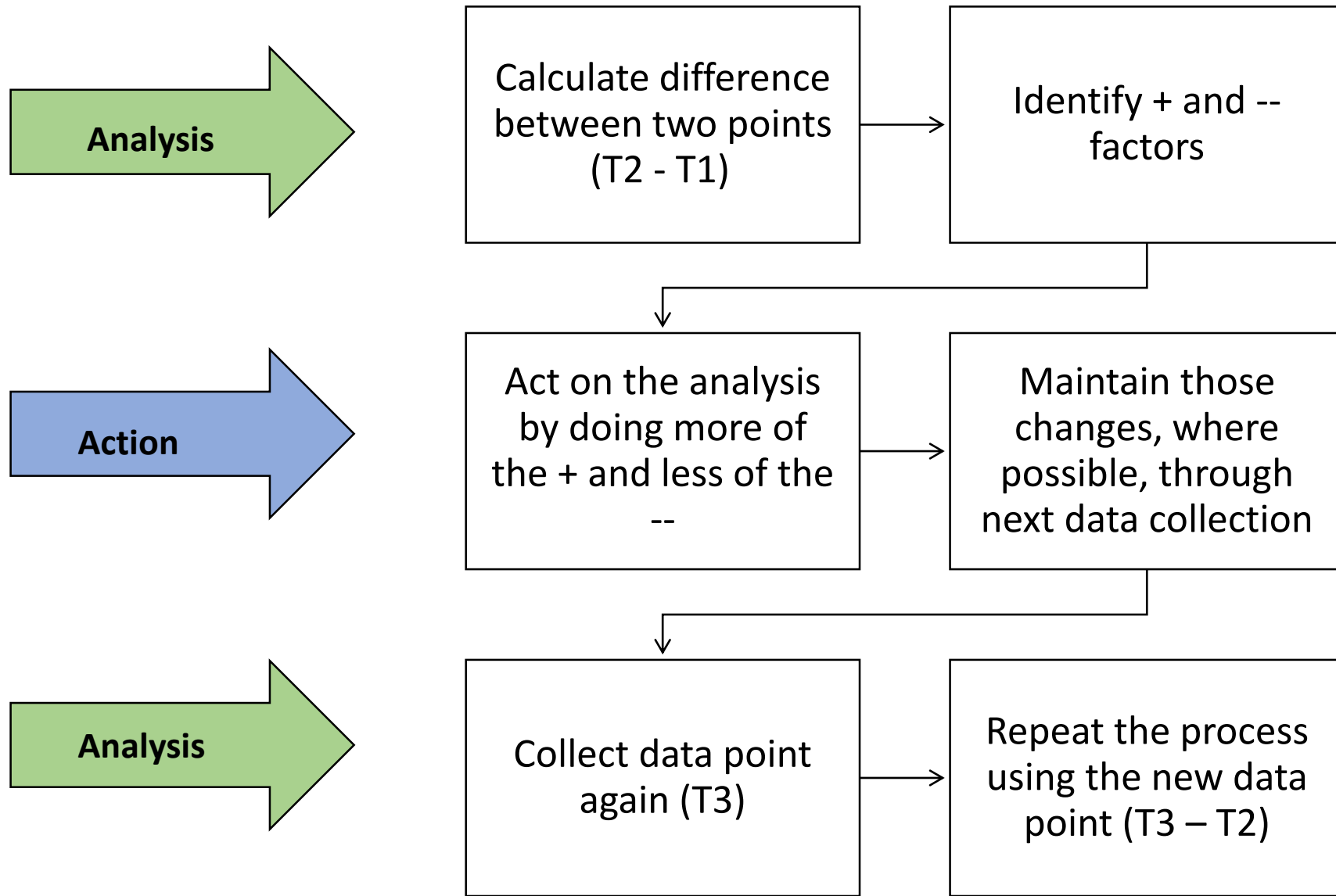
- Did anything happen differently that month?
- What kind of verbal or written feedback did you receive outside the survey?
- Did some people not respond?



# Taking Action on the Analysis

- Using qualitative data to help understand quantitative differences leads us to potential explanations for why we saw the changes we did
- Using staff and client expertise, isolate the factors that likely had the biggest impact
- Maintain/strengthen the things believed to be leading to a positive change and reduce/eliminate the things believed to be leading to a negative change
- Assess difference at next opportunity for quantitative data collection
- Repeat

# Analysis and Action – An Iterative Process



# Example: Client Satisfaction

## Analysis

### **Logistical Differences between Sept. and Oct:**

- Event in afternoon
- Laptops provided
- Snacks provided

### **Staff Reflections on Differences:**

- More welcoming instructor

### **Client Feedback from Oct.:**

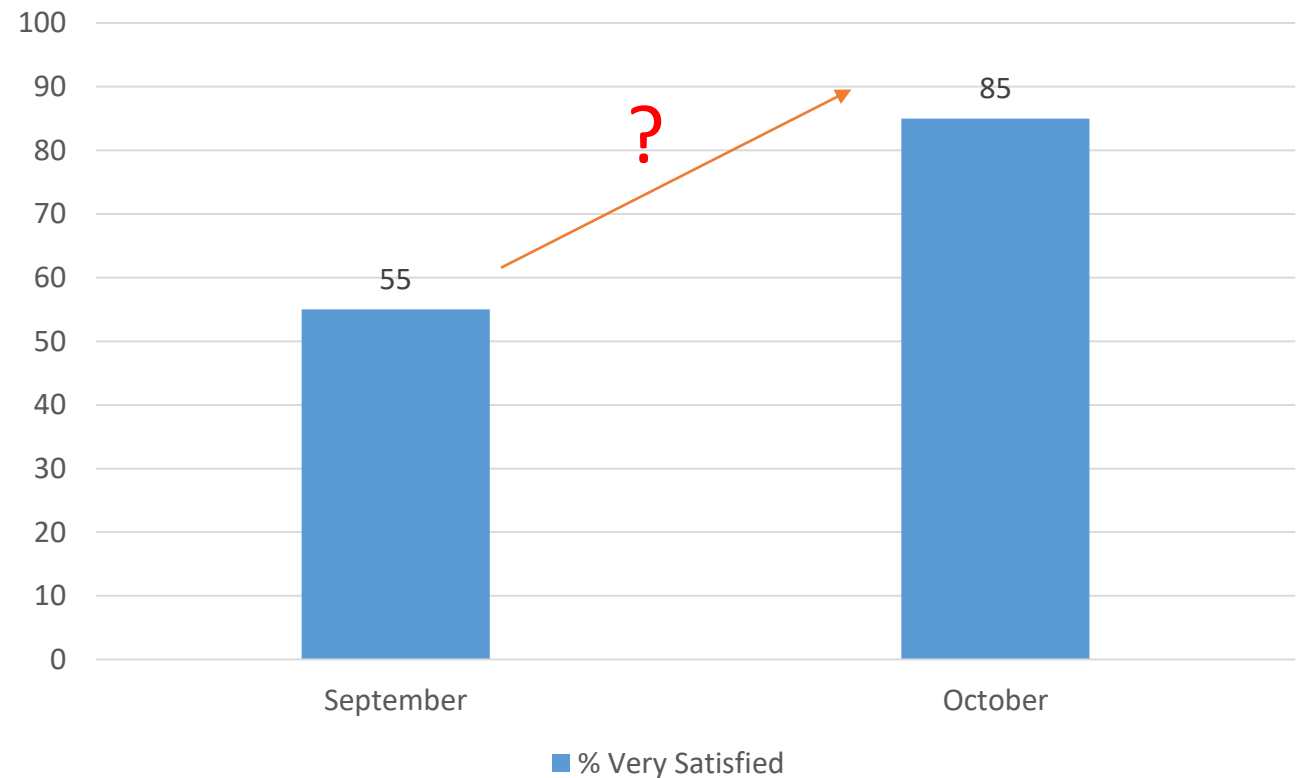
- Engaging content

## Action

### **More of the + in Nov.**

- Provide laptops again
- Provide snacks again

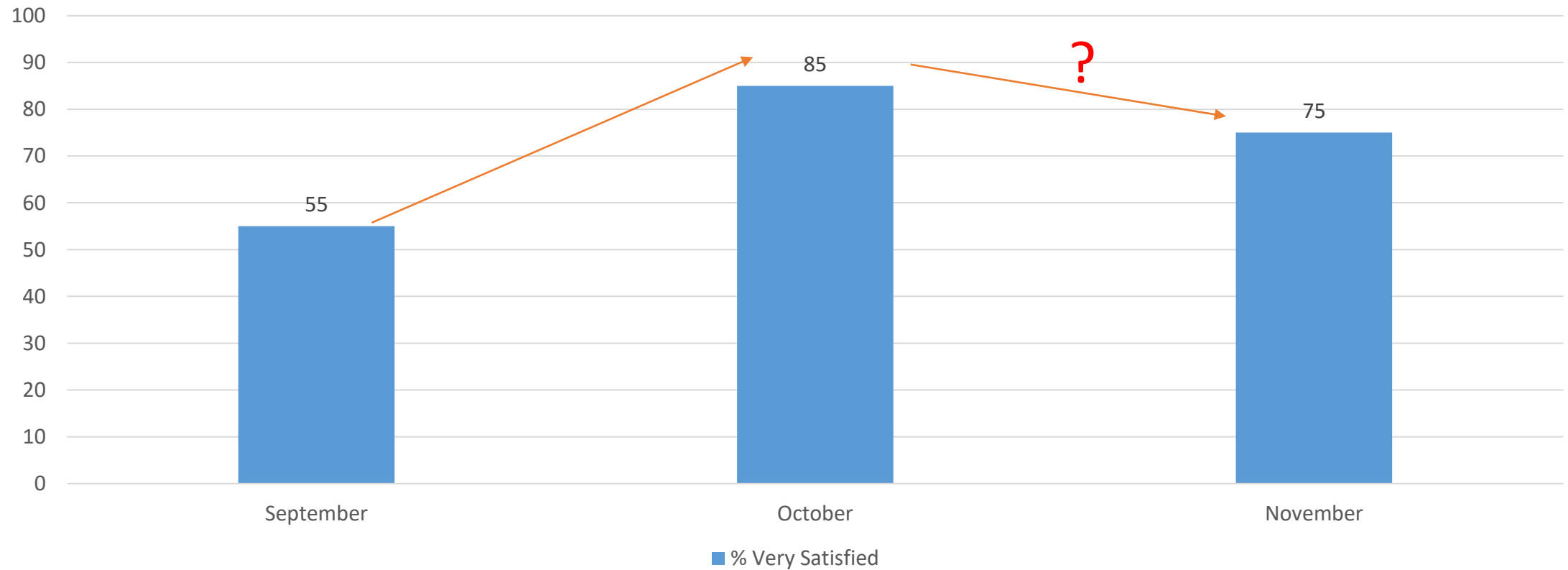
% Clients Reporting “Very Satisfied” with Services, by Month





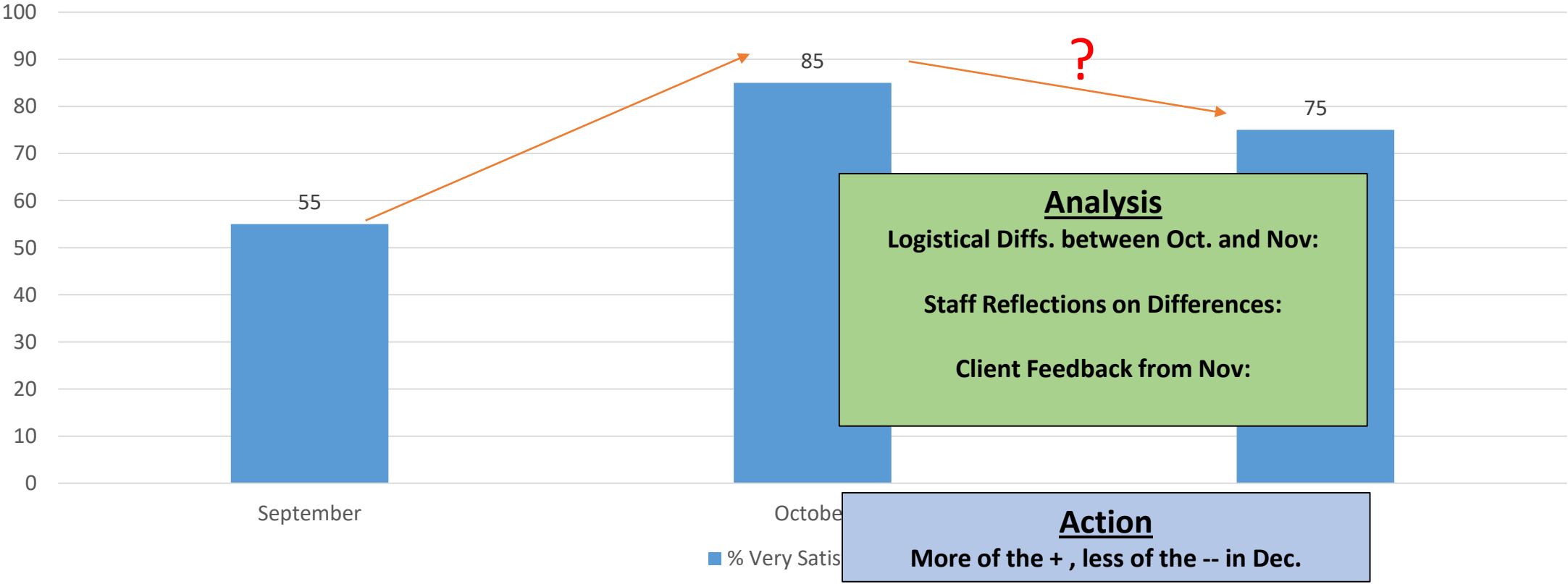
# Example: Client Satisfaction, Process Repeats

% Clients Reporting "Very Satisfied" with Services, by Month



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# Notes on Timing

- We can do this type of analysis retrospectively
  - Looking back, what happened to lead to the changes we noticed between Time 1 and Time 2 or between Location 1 and Location 2?
- We can also do it proactively to test particular ideas or theories about how to improve program performance
  - If we make this change at Time 1, do we notice an effect on the quantitative results at Time 2?
  - This is the typical Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model of continuous improvement

# Data Amidst Uncertainty

- Delicate balance because data on client experience is as vital as ever but beware of survey fatigue
- How can we serve clients and collect data at the same time?
- Continue to disaggregate – are certain sub-groups experiencing this time differently?
- Be Flexible – we can only do our best with the cards we have at hand...funders are in the same boat
- Are there any programmatic elements you will maintain even after being “unnecessary” because clients are responding well to them?

Other Ideas, Questions, Other  
Considerations?

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