



GOODMAN RESEARCH GROUP, INC. PERSPECTIVES

Evaluation and Research News From Cambridge MA

Spring/Summer 2003

greetings from the president



This year marks the 15th anniversary of Goodman Research Group, Inc. I began the firm as a one-person operation and it has grown to a full-service company, offering research, evaluation and consultation to clients from many fields.

Over the years, a number of people have asked why we didn't specialize more in a particular content area, such as media, child development, or health education. The answer is that we made a deliberate decision, early on, to explore evaluation across a wide range of fields. The breadth of projects at GRG has really contributed to the richness of our work, as it allows us to bring multiple perspectives to our clients' projects. While what each client experiences is unique to their field and situation, the evaluation issues are really quite similar across organizations and disciplines.

Regardless of the type of organization or program, the discipline, or the context in which a client operates, there are common threads in the process and the evaluator-client relationship. For example, there are certain features of the evaluator-client relationship that, when present, tend to produce higher quality evaluations:

- the client is able to articulate realistic goals and objectives (see the conversation with Colleen Manning on page 3)
- the organization has the capacity to work with an evaluator and use evaluation findings
- there is a clear understanding of where the evaluation fits into the client's organizational structure

GRG has been extremely fortunate in the clients who have found their way to us. The number of organizations seeking us out for all facets of evaluation research has increased steadily over the years. Moreover, our clients continue to challenge us with projects of escalating scope and complexity. We love it when we are pushed to find new approaches, when we have a chance to combine our expertise in new ways to solve unique challenges, and

when we devise customized mixtures of traditional and state-of-the-art data collection and analysis. We derive great satisfaction when clients engage with us in an open and dynamic exchange of ideas, similar to the energizing cross-talk we foster in our own office.

Speaking of our office, GRG has an extremely talented staff and consultants (whom you will meet in this and future newsletters). They bring to their work not only outstanding academic credentials and experience but also a passion for the exploration of ideas and possibilities. All of GRG's staff embody the organization's commitment to fresh thinking, dynamic collaboration that honors research objectivity, respect for the individuality of clients' needs, and a willingness to go the extra mile to find the right solution for the challenge at hand. We want to learn all that we can about the real world environment in which our clients' projects exist, so that we can carry out the most meaningful evaluations and make recommendations that will enhance and refine their work in progress.

At the same time, we aim to deepen our clients' understanding of evaluation, as we work with them, step-by-step throughout the life of their projects. From our perspective, connection with clients is not merely a contractual arrangement; it is a relationship we see extending beyond the start and end dates of any specific project.

That, in essence, is what this newsletter is about. We view it as a vehicle for extending our relationship with you, our clients and prospective clients. It is an opportunity to tell you about our ongoing work, share insights and advice that may help you in your day-to-day project management, and include you in our celebrations of milestones. We hope you find this communication both interesting and helpful. And if you have any suggestions for topics you'd like to see covered, I hope you'll give us a call or send us a message.

Irene F. Goodman, Ed.D.
Founder and President

