Jan 7, 2016
Hi Carol, Brian, Diana, and Rosa,

Here is the spreadsheet with the compiled evaluations and room counts data. This is a "new-and-improved" spreadsheet! I created a sheet displaying each session across the rows with all of the stats for each session, and has conditional formats so unusually low (or high) data points stand out. This will help you more easily see the speakers with the lowest scores so you do not have to scroll through the drop-down menu for each session - though this sheet is still included if you want to quickly jump to a particular session to read the individual comments. I also formatted for very empty and also very full rooms to help with matching speakers with more appropriate room capacities - you can tinker with my conditional formats if you want to use different percentiles etc. There's conditional formatting for the other stats too.

The overall response rate for the entire conference was 25%, meaning that 25% of attendees who were in sessions at the 60 minute headcount submitted an evaluation. This was an improvement from 23% last year, but that's hardly an improvement in any significant sense. Based on "undercover" observations from sessions I attended, I do not think the paper signs on the tables were effective. For instance, I saw that 1 person would pull the paper over to compose their evaluation, and the others at the table walked away because they didn't want to wait to get the paper. I also saw tables without the papers, the papers had fallen on the floor, and I also suspect some attendees may have unknowingly picked up the papers along with the rest of their stuff when they were leaving, and whatever else who knows. Plus, that's a lot of individual sheets of paper to have printed, one for every table in all of the rooms.

I think for next year we might revisit ways to display the poll codes on a poster next to the projector screens in each room, somewhere that all attendees are already looking during the session so many attendees can look up the poll code at the same time. I could also make a shorter 1-minute video for how to compose the text messages and then we ask each of the speakers in the first block of sessions to play the video for their attendees - this would ensure that every attendee knows about the evaluations system on the same day they will submit their evaluations, as opposed to watching the video days or weeks before the conference starts or not watching it at all. Realistically I don't think we will ever get a very high response rate, say 50% or higher, because some/many attendees just want to get out of the sessions faster to use the restroom, rush to their next session, or simply will not care enough to submit evaluations at all or maybe only submit if the session was unusually bad or unusually good. But we do have room to improve from 25% still! I think this evaluations system works well, it is convenient for attendees to simply send a text message, speakers get their results in real-time with full transparency, it is not very time-consuming for me to aggregate and compute statistics from the data, and it enables us to get meaningful feedback with minimal demands on speakers and attendees.

Finally, there were some questionable data points that may have resulted from an apparent disagreement or conflicting information between Connie and Dave on the actual room capacities. Connie said she did physical chair counts in empty rooms to fix Dave's numbers, so I used Connie's numbers, but there still seems to be inconsistencies. You'll see some speakers have greater than 100% room fullness, so unless we violated fire code or we can't count heads very well, then there's clearly something wrong!

Alright, I'll stop here. Thanks, Jason