Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations

Spring 2007, Vol. 18, No. 1

Connections

YOUR INFORMATION DESTINATION

Why should you pay attention to paid staff in your organization?

by Lynne Toupin

I recently had the opportunity to be a speaker in the RCVO's "So What?" series at Grant MacEwan College in Edmonton. The following is an overview of some of the key points made during the presentation.

It's time to pay attention to our sector's workforce

As a national non-profit organization, the HR Council for the Voluntary/Non-profit Sector (HR Council)'s mandate is to address issues and identify trends affecting paid employment in voluntary and non-profit organizations across the country.

Until recently, a lot of the attention has focused on volunteers and volunteerism; with unemployment at an all time low, the imminent retirement of the baby-boomers, growing competition for talent, and a younger and more diverse workforce coming on-line, it's time to shine the light on paid employees in our sector. Unlike other sectors of the economy that invest in physical capital (i.e. machines) to produce products, ours is all about deploying human capital to achieve results, such as improving our communities or improving the lives of individuals in our communities. In a rapidly changing world, we must not only deploy our precious human resources effectively, but like other sectors of the economy, we must *invest* in our workforce if we are to be truly responsive to the changing needs of our communities.

Few people in the sector realize there are nearly 1.2 million employees that work in voluntary non-profit organizations across the country. That's 7% of the country's workforce, working in 69,000 organizations.[1] Even more surprising to many, is that the voluntary and non-profit sector employs at least as many people as the country's entire construction industry. In Alberta alone, 19,000 non-profit organizations employ some 176,000 people, generating $9.6 billion for the province's economy. [2]

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IN THIS ISSUE

We need quiet time to examine our lives openly and honestly. Spending quiet time alone gives your mind an opportunity to review itself and create order.

Susan Taylor

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The vast majority of employers in the sector are small. Seventy-five percent of them employ less than 10 people, however larger organizations employ half of the total workforce. In Alberta, the 5% of organizations with annual revenues of $1 million or more account for 64% of the sector's paid staff.[3] It's probably no surprise to learn that 74% of the sector's employees are women, and that nearly 40% are over the age of 45.

While these may be interesting statistics, we still do not know enough about the sector's workforce. The HR Council is currently undertaking a major sector study to provide critical insights into key characteristics of the sector's workforce and will release an initial report in February 2008.

Alberta at the forefront of addressing issues of paid employment with the Non-profit Workforce Strategy

Achieving a better understanding of our sector's labour force is important and the current situation in Alberta adds a certain degree of urgency. As the boom continues in the energy sector, the shortage of workers is hitting the voluntary and non-profit sector especially hard. Organizations are struggling to recruit and retain staff, unable to keep up with the private and public sectors' ability to offer higher salaries and better benefits. How much longer will organizations be able to survive? How long will it be before they are unable to deliver vital services to people in the community? Will citizens and elected officials start to take notice?

From a national perspective, the situation in Alberta is interesting as the province is on the leading edge of identifying and addressing the issues and needs of its voluntary and non-profit sector. Representatives from the sector were involved in a number

of meetings with the provincial government earlier this year, with feedback from those meetings informing the *Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector*. The strategy outlines a number of challenges that the sector is currently facing and has identified action steps to address the workforce issues, including:

- Informing Albertans, the government and industry about the value of the sector and the impact it has on the lives of those in the community

- Providing tools to non-profit organizations so they may better promote the sector as an employer of choice

- Supporting collaboration between the sector and educational institutions to explore creative solutions that can meet the current and future needs of the sector

- Providing tools and resources to aid organizations in developing and implementing human resource plans.

A few practical strategies to consider

The Non-profit Workforce Strategy will roll out over the next few months, but in the meantime there are certainly some practical strategies that organizations can undertake to both retain their existing workers and recruit new employees.

Strategy 1: Understand what your employees want in a job

Maybe it's a great work environment, a feeling of accomplishment, or the chance to make a difference. It may be surprising to learn that these consistently outrank job security, comprehensive benefits and a competitive salary when employees are asked what job qualities they value most. Only 37% of respondents in a jobquality.ca[4] survey cited having a job that pays well as "very important," while nearly 90% felt that having a sense of accomplishment was very important.

So what does that mean for the voluntary and non-profit sector? While organizations may never be able to fully compete with their private or public sector counterparts when it comes to salaries, job security or comprehensive benefits plans, the things that people value most in their jobs are exactly what the sector is ideally positioned to provide - we just need to do a better job of promoting it. Think of how we solicit the financial support of donors, sponsors and philanthropists - we talk about values alignment and their ability to make a difference in the community. Why not use the same approach when recruiting staff to work in our organizations?

It's also important to note that what works for one employee may not necessarily appeal to someone else. Depending on their personal situations, family obligations or lifestyles, employees are going to want different things. One may prefer to work a compressed work week, while another may want to have the opportunity to represent the organization in the community. The key is to find out what each person wants and to tailor options accordingly.

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Strategy 2: Be a great workplace

This is more than a nice office with a view. A great workplace values the contributions of every employee, treats people fairly and supports individuals as they complete their work. In turn, employees look forward to coming to work, value and respect their peers and recognize that they are an integral part of the team.

An easy way to start is to review your organization's mission and values and determine if your organization is on track or has drifted off course. You can also look at how your organization manages its day-to-day operations to see if they are in line with mission and values. By infusing the organizations' mission and values in the day-to-day work, staff will be consistently reminded of how what they are doing relates to the big picture - giving them a sense of accomplishment and the opportunity to see exactly how they are making a difference.

Developing a good set of HR policies and practices is another way to make your organization a great place to work. By establishing standards and defining some ground rules, employees will feel that they are being treated fairly. If you are going to review your organization's current policies and practices, solicit the input of employees to find out what they think. Assigning reasonable workloads, giving ample recognition and support, and providing training and learning opportunities are other ways that you can make your organization a great place to work.

Strategy 3: Recruit candidates who fit the organization

Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't* put it best when he says "First get the right people on the bus." Once you've got the right people on board, "then you can figure out where to drive it."

Recruiting new employees is an expensive and time-consuming undertaking. Organizations can't afford to waste time and money hiring staff, only to have them leave shortly afterwards, willingly or not, because they didn't "fit" the organization. When looking for new staff assess a candidate's attitude first, and their skills and knowledge second. It's a lot easier to teach someone whose attitude "fits" the organization the skills and knowledge they need to do the job than to try and change a person's attitude to conform to the organization's culture.

Taking a proactive approach to recruitment is another way to make sure you've got the right people waiting to get on the bus. You should always be on the lookout for new talent, even if you don't currently have a vacant position to fill, because you never know when someone may decide to resign or need to take an extended leave. Identify potential employees in your existing networks and keep in touch.

Strategy 4: Inform and educate funders and the public about work in the sector

With the implementation of the Non-profit Workforce Strategy, the Alberta government has acknowledged that there are workforce issues facing the voluntary and non-profit sector and is working with key players in the sector to address them. While this is a step in the right direction, more needs to be done to inform and educate funders and the public about the sector and its vital role in the community.

Many voluntary and non-profit organizations provide essential or critical services in the community, services which often have been

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downloaded onto them from the provincial government. It's important to remind the public what the community would look like without food banks, homeless shelters, recreation programs, transition houses or supports for the disabled.

The move to project funding without recognizing the need to provide for core infrastructure costs is a ongoing challenge that many voluntary and non-profit organizations face. No for profit business would survive without support for core business costs, so why must voluntary and non-profit organizations? It's important for funders to understand how organizations work and why core funding is a crucial aspect of any non-profit organization's financial sustainability.

With Alberta's economic boom showing no signs of slowing down, the voluntary/non-profit sector must address the growing problems of recruitment and retention if it is to continue to offer quality services and programs. Out of this challenge comes opportunity—the opportunity to raise awareness with the public and with funders, donors and governments about the sector, its value and its importance to Albertans and the communities they live in.

For more information about the HR Council and to access free practical tools, information and services related to non-profit workplace issues and HR management, visit hrcouncil.ca.

[1] Excluding municipalities, universities, schools and hospitals.

[2] Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, Human Resources Issues for Alberta's Non-profits, 2006

[3] Roach, Robert, The Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Alberta: Regional Highlights from the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations, 2006.

[4] Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2003. ⊡

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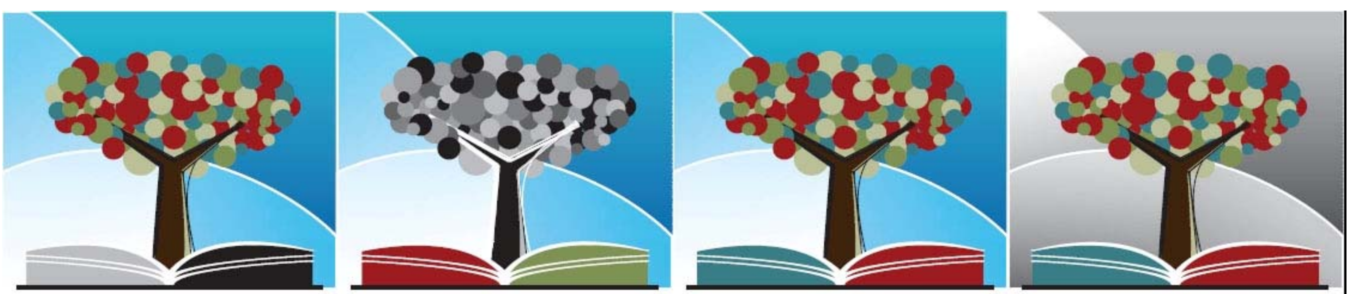

Make your work easier: Take time to review new resources at RCVO

by Reka Serfozo

New resources published by Imagine Canada's Knowledge Development Centre (KDC) are now available in both English and French at the RCVO. The collection was provided by Volunteer Alberta and the Alberta Local Network of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative before the CVI's conclusion in March 2007. These reports, manuals and fact sheets include a range of topics important to the development of leadership and advancement of the voluntary sector in Canada and are the result of community-based and national research projects funded by the KDC between 2002 and 2006.

The KDC was funded by the Government of Canada through the Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI). Its mandate was building the body of knowledge on volunteers and volunteering and transferring this knowledge to voluntary organizations, improving their capacity to benefit Canadians. During its span, the CVI promoted the sharing of best practices across Canada, and created valuable print and online resources critical to increasing capacity throughout the sector.

One of the key findings that emerged from the Canada Volunteerism Initiative was that challenges facing organizations in the nonprofit/ voluntary sector were not unique to a particular region or sub-sector. The best practices and strategies compiled in these resources allow organizations to pool knowledge and increase their ability to meet their missions.

Recruitment and retention of volunteers has remained a key issue facing the voluntary sector. The "same ten people" still tend to give the most time volunteering, as the Canadian Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP, Statistics Canada, 2004) demonstrates. For example, in Alberta, 25% of volunteers gave 75%

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of the total volunteer hours in 2004. How can you increase your organization's pool of volunteers and also keep committed volunteers from burning out? There are several new resources which may help.

An integral part of keeping and increasing your pool of volunteers is understanding which factors make a volunteer program successful and what motivates core volunteers. "**One Plank at a time: Volunteer harbour management in Nova Scotia**" by Dan McInnes, Erica de Sousa and Ishbel Munroe may not sound applicable in an Albertan setting, but the research within the report identifies major factors contributing to volunteer burnout that are applicable to many different types of nonprofits. In addition to understanding what contributes to burnout, knowing what keeps core volunteers (defined as those who volunteer more than 188 hours per year) motivated is important. The research report entitled "**Core volunteers: Exploring the values, attitudes and behaviors underlying sustained volunteerism in Canada**" by Gotlib Conn and Cathy Barr of Imagine Canada provides tips and strategies for recruiting and retaining core volunteers. "**Promising practices for volunteer administration in hospitals**" by Femida Handy, Robert Mound, Lisa-Marie Vaccaro and Karin Prochazka contains numerous practical suggestions for improving organizations' recruitment practices valuable outside a hospital context.

New tools can also help your organization look past the "usual suspects": the people who are continually approached to volunteer. How inclusive is your organization? The Institute for Advancement of Aboriginal Women (IAWW) in Edmonton undertook a national research study on Aboriginal women volunteers. Their findings resulted in a handbook, "**Guidelines for the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal women volunteers,**" as well as a research report, "**Volunteerism in Aboriginal communities: Volunteer – who me?**" The handbook explains how nonprofit organizations need to build rapport with Aboriginal women and understand their culture if they wish to recruit them as volunteers. The KDC Bulletin focusing on "**Volunteering, Diversity and Inclusion**" lists several new tools addressing the challenge of how to create communities where differences are valued and everyone is able to contribute to enriching their society and enjoying its benefits.

Wouldn't it be great to have a highly skilled professional willing to volunteer for your organization? "**Engaging Retired Leaders as Volunteer Leaders: A Research Report**" and "**Engaging Retired Leaders as Volunteers: A resource manual for Nonprofit and Charitable Organizations,**" both by Har Singh, Dvora Levin and John Forde, offer strategies for successfully recruiting highly skilled and experienced individuals as volunteers.

In Alberta, 51% of those aged 15 to 24 volunteered in 2004, contributing an average of 154 hours annually (CSGVP, Statistics Canada). Is your organization effectively engaging the skills and talents of youth in your community? "**Attracting and keeping youth volunteers: Creating a governance culture that nurtures and values youth**" a study by the Rising Tide Cooperative of New Brunswick focuses on what needs to change in the management and governance of nonprofit organizations in order for them to attract young people as volunteers. Two valuable tools to help your organization prepare for youth volunteers as well as prepare youth for volunteering are "**Getting the most out of your volunteer experience: a manual for high school students**" and "**Helping students get the most out of volunteering: a manual for schools and voluntary organizations**" by Marc Pancer, Steven Brown, Ailsa Henderson, Kimberly Ellis-Hale, and Vanessa Buote. These resources help create a positive experience for your organization and lay the foundation for youth to volunteer throughout their lives.

These are a small sampling of the new resources available. Other areas include risk management (including a useful guide for developing a risk management strategy and a checklist for reducing insurance costs), how to involve businesses in employee volunteerism, recruitment of board volunteers, and much more!

During the CVI, a tremendous amount of research about the voluntary sector was compiled. Although it may seem difficult to make the time, it is important to access and implement findings and best practices. Problems are often shared, whether it is in another local organization or in another community in Canada; therefore, practical solutions can also be shared. The tips and information that exist can make your organization more productive, and the initial investment of time may pay off exponentially! ⊡

KDC Resources at the RCVO are also available online in the Imagine Canada – John Hodgson Special Collection on Volunteers and Volunteering at http://nonprofitscan.andornot.com/vvr.aspx.

For information contact Reka Serfozo at volab@volunteeralberta.ab.ca

Courses

Leadership Program Set for Fall Launch

MacEwan's new Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector program begins in mid-September, attracting applicants from the Edmonton region and central Alberta, as well as students from other parts of the province. This program is designed to address the development needs of Executive Directors of small to medium sized non-profit organizations, individuals moving into senior leadership roles within the sector and others who may be specialists in their own discipline, but less experienced in leading an organization.

The hybrid program format, which combines face-to-face and online coursework, allows participants to build strong peer relationships and a learning community. This program design appeals to varied student learning styles, workplaces and career goals. Learning activities relate to the personal leadership development of participants, as well as community and workplace leadership challenges undertaken by leaders in the voluntary/non-profit sector. The program highlights leadership and management competencies identified by the National Learning Initiative for the Voluntary Sector (NLI), a research project which examined senior leadership roles supporting the sector now and in the future. More information about the NLI can be found at http://www.hrcouncil.ca/initiatives/pg002_e.cfm

Course developers, advisors and instructional designers have collaborated in developing a unique program since the post-diploma certificate credential was approved earlier in the year. Building on the learning of the NLI, an advisory group including local leaders and practitioners, as well as the primary researcher on the NLI informed the work of seven course developers, who worked closely with instructional designers to create learning opportunities. Activities link to student's real-life leadership situations, at work, in volunteer leadership roles and in the wider community.

The Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector program is supported by Program Chair: Frank Saccucci, Program Advisor: Brigitte Rondeau, and Curriculum Coordinator: Wendy MacDonald. Additional faculty will be announced later in the year.

Wendy MacDonald and Brigitte Rondeau

The eighteen month, part-time program includes seven courses; four scheduled for the 2007/08 academic year and three in 2008/09. Each course starts with a two-day workshop style session at MacEwan's City Centre campus, followed by 30 hours of online and other distance coursework undertaken individually and in teams. Group activities are an important aspect of leadership development. The on-site days for most courses are Fridays and Saturdays, a model that many employers and prospective students surveyed felt would encourage shared responsibility for career development.

Student financial assistance for the new program includes ten $1,000 scholarships funded by the MacEwan School of Business (application deadline August 15, 2007), as well as possible support through several new bursary programs funded by the Government of Alberta in support of non-profit human services organizations. Training bursaries are offered by several foundations to qualifying applicants and many other funding resources are available to prospective applicants. Additional student funding information can be obtained at www.macewan.ca/leadership or contact macdonaldw@macewan.ca.

The Executive Leadership in the Non-Profit Sector program will be accepting applications until mid-August, however capacity is limited. For further information, go to executiveleadership@macewan.ca or call 780-497-5268 or toll free at 1-888-497-4622 ext.5268.

Learning Opportunities

Strengthening Volunteer Boards

Saturday, October 27, 2007
9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Room 5-137
Grant MacEwan College,
10700-104 Ave., Edmonton, AB

As a board member of a nonprofit organization, have you ever wondered …

- What are my legal and ethical responsibilities?
- What role do I play in governing our organization?
- How can our board organize its work fairly and efficiently to avoid volunteer and staff burnout?
- How can we develop policies that will help us make consistent decisions?
- How can we encourage teamwork between the board and staff?

If you're a new board member wanting to learn more about your role, or an experienced board member wishing to enhance your skills and work effectively as a team member, this workshop is for you. Workshop content will focus on incorporated and nonprofit organizations and is not appropriate for advisory boards. Limit of three board members per organization please.

For registration call 780-497–5616 or rcvo@macewan.ca.

"So What? Linking Research & Practice in the Voluntary Sector" 2007/2008 Series

In recent years there has been a massive increase in the quality and volume of applied research regarding best practices in managing and leading nonprofit organizations. Grant MacEwan College, in conjunction with the Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations (RCVO) and TransCanada, is once again offering a series of breakfast discussions, called the *"So What?"* series, aimed at increasing knowledge and dialogue about applied research with leaders of community organizations.

First Session (Marie Gervais)
November 7, 2007
8:30-10:30 a.m., Room 6-313H
Grant MacEwan College,
10700-104 Ave., Edmonton, AB

Join Marie Gervais November 7 for her presentation: Intercultural Competence in the Voluntary Sector: Real or Ideal.

For information on the series call 780-497-5616 or e-mail rcvo@macewan.ca

WillPower Wills Week 2007 Charities Luncheon

Friday, November 16, 2007
12:00—1:30 p.m.,
Conference Theatre, Room 5-142,
Grant MacEwan College,
10700-104 Ave., Edmonton, AB
Lunch is included

Planned Giving "Lite" - A Practical Approach to Building Legacy Gifts for Your Organization

Guest Speakers Charles and Suzanne Nunn—Endowment Horizons, California

Charles and Suzanne have years of experience juggling the day-to-day challenges of leading charitable organizations and the difficulties of getting to the work of building legacy gifts. They have successfully developed a strategy for getting this important job done. They will share their story and expertise and how they are helping Edmonton area charities through the Edmonton Community Foundation.

Please RSVP by calling 780-423-4956. For more information, visit the Edmonton Community Foundation website at www.ecfoundation.org.

Fundraising Success: Where to Start and How to Build It!

Saturday, November 24, 2007
Grant MacEwan College
10700-104 Ave., Edmonton, AB

Achieving success takes resources! Are you raising funds in a small organization; or starting a new fund development program; or just learning the basics? Then this workshop is for you. Come and explore the answers to key questions on regulations, the people needed on your development team, the right tools to use, and how to compete with high profile campaigns.

This workshop was created with the support of TransCanada Pipelines to create awareness, build confidence and provide resource materials and sources for further learning with regards to fundraising programs.

For registration call 780-497–5616 or rcvo@macewan.ca.

RCVO NOTICE

- ☑ Watch for updates to our events on www.rcvo.org
- ☑ See our website for our On The Road Destinations this fall

Adapting environmental scanning processes for use by voluntary sector organizations

by Jim Kingle

Overview

This article will briefly introduce the concept of environmental scanning, describe its importance to voluntary sector organizations, identify how it may be used in voluntary sector organizations, and describe a basic environmental scanning process that any voluntary sector organization can adapt to meet its own financial, human and time constraints. Finally, the author will describe a small-scale, easily replicated environmental scanning process undertaken at the request of Ms. Bev Parks, Executive Director, Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre in Edmonton.

What is Environmental Scanning?

Stern (1999) defines environmental scanning as "a process for discovering and documenting facts and trends in the operating environment that are likely to affect the organization in its future work." While there are differing viewpoints on what is meant by the 'operating environment', many prefer to view it both as the world outside the organization as well as that internal to the organization itself.

Environmental scanning was originally a management process used by businesses to gather information from the environment to better achieve sustainable competitive advantage. It is now a process commonly used by many voluntary sector organizations in a variety of ways to address a myriad of information and planning needs.

It is true that some environmental scanning processes may take months to complete and require considerable human resources. However, environmental scanning need not be limited only to large voluntary sector organizations with large research budgets. By narrowing the scope and focus of an environmental scan, it is possible to plan and conduct an environmental scanning process, and write a report in several weeks. An example of an environmental scanning process recently used by the author with Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre in Edmonton will be presented. This process took approximately 48 hours to complete between mid-April and early May 2007.

Why is Environmental Scanning Important?

There are several major reasons why environmental scanning is important to voluntary organizations. Abels (2002) notes that all organizations need to monitor at some level what goes on in their environments and recognize their strength and weaknesses in relation to it. Wei Choo (2001) states that organizations scan the environment to avoid surprises, identify threats and opportunities, and improve long term and short term planning.

How is Environmental Scanning Being Used in the Voluntary Sector?

Most commonly, voluntary sector organizations undertake environmental scanning processes as part of developing a strategic plan. The report generated from a scan of an organization's internal and external environments can be used to orient strategic planning participants by providing a common foundation of knowledge about the organization's challenges and opportunities.

However, environmental scanning has been used for a variety of other purposes by public and voluntary sector organizations in recent years, including:

- An environmental scan on volunteerism and the voluntary sector in New Brunswick prepared by AIDS New Brunswick;
- A human resources environmental scan to identify current and future human resources needs undertaken by the Public Service of Canada;
- An environmental scan of pan-Canadian activities related to

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school and nutrition completed by the Joint Consortium for School Health Secretariat; and

- An environmental scan of the contemporary dance presentation community nationally commissioned by Canadian Heritage.

What are the Basic Steps in the Environmental Scanning Process?

Bryson (1995) describes the following process for conducting an environmental scan:

1 **Deciding on the purpose, participants, and time needed to carry out the environmental scan.** It is important to clarify the reasons for undertaking the environmental scan in the first place. Is it to provide information on emerging issues and trends? Is it to gain helpful information for a strategic planning process? Who will undertake the scanning process: volunteers, board members, staff, consultants, or a combination of these? How much time will be devoted to gathering and analyzing the information?

2. Plan and carry out the environmental scanning activities. This involves identifying key informants to interview and written information sources to be reviewed. It also means preparing questions for key stakeholders and determining what approaches will be used to gain feedback (survey, focus group, telephone interview, in-person interviews, or a combination of such approaches).

3. **Analyze the feedback gained from environmental scanning.** A variety of techniques may be used to analyze the feedback received, depending on whether an individual or group does the analysis.

4. **Prepare report and distribute.** A variety of formats may be used to organize environmental scanning information in a written format. A formal report can be prepared that identifies the feedback received from stakeholders. Bryson (1995) notes that brief issue or trend summaries may be prepared, or three to five page policy papers developed, in order to explore specific issues or trends in greater depth.

An Environmental Scan for Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre

Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre is an Edmonton-based organization which has as its mission, "Active involvement of parents and their families in a strong vibrant community." The Centre has been delivering programs and services focusing on the support of children and parents since 1963.

In late March 2007, Ms. Bev Parks, Executive Director of the Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre contacted the author to inform him that the organization would be undertaking a strategic planning process between April and June. As part of the process, Bev contracted the author to undertake a small-scale environmental scan that needed to be completed and a report prepared by early May.

The author utilized the basic environmental scanning process previously described to plan, conduct, and complete Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre's environmental scanning process:

Identify the purpose, participants, and time needed to carry out the environmental scan. The purpose of the environmental scan for Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre was to scan the environment and prepare a report that would be used to help inform Norwood board and senior staff members engaged in the strategic planning process. As previously noted, the time to conduct the environmental scan and write the report was approximately 48 hours allocated over approximately three-and-a-half weeks between mid-April and early May. It was determined that the environmental scanning process was to include researching readily available publications as well gaining feedback from key Norwood Centre stakeholders including parents, partners, funders, staff, and board members.

Plan and carry out the environmental scanning activities. A brief set of questions was prepared that could be commonly asked of Centre staff, board, funders, and partners. These were:

1. What do you see as the most significant challenges facing the Centre over the next three years?

2. What do you see as the most significant opportunities facing the Centre over the next three years?

3. What do you believe the Centre should:
   - Start doing?
   - Stop doing?
   - Continue doing?

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4. What feedback do you hear in the community about the Centre and its services?

5. What final comments would you offer about the Centre and its services?

Parents were asked somewhat different questions that aimed to identify their views of Centre programs and suggestions for improvement.

Based on the need to gain access to stakeholders in a timely way, the following research methods were utilized for each of the major stakeholder groups:

- A focus group session with Centre staff as part of their regular April staff meeting day;
- A focus group with Centre board members built into their May board meeting;
- Informal in-person interviews with parents as they brought their children to programs at the Centre;
- Telephone interviews with parents receiving home visits from Centre staff; and
- Telephone interviews with funders and key partners.

Over approximately 32 hours in April, the author organized and completed:

- A review of several research publications with data relevant to Norwood Centre's environmental scan;
- Focus groups with Centre board and staff members;
- In-person interviews with 11 parents in three different Centre programs;
- Telephone interviews with six parents receiving home visits from Norwood staff; and
- Telephone interviews with five partner organizations' representatives and four funders.

Analyze the feedback gained from environmental scanning. In eight hours during the first week of May, the author analyzed the collected data and identified common themes across the various stakeholder groups.

Prepare report and distribute. The author wrote up the Centre's "Environmental Scanning Report" over eight hours during the first week of May and presented it to the Executive Director. The report was distributed to Centre Board and senior staff as a resource for use in their strategic planning deliberations.

As the Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre environmental scanning process demonstrates, an environmental scanning process can be easily tailored to the time and resource constraints of the organization. In this particular example, funding was available to hire a consultant to conduct and write up the environmental scan. Other options may be possible if an organization does not have financial resources to pay a consultant to undertake an environmental process. These include utilizing board, staff, and/or volunteers to conduct interviews or focus groups with key stakeholders, analyze the results, and write up the environmental scanning report.

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Character in fundraising - principle number five: Efficiency

by Roger Breault

This article is the fifth of series on the subject of seven character traits to develop to become an effective, productive and authentic fundraiser. It is written with the intent to fill a sizable gap in the formation and education of those who want to be true fundraising professionals.

Have you ever wondered why the business of fundraising generates so much paperwork? It's amazing isn't it? There are so many priorities, some things are urgent; others are important and may not require immediate attention. The in-basket climbs and, in spite of keeping a frenetic pace, you never diminish the volume of work that needs to be accomplished.

The predictable question arises: "How efficient am I?" Am I getting as much done daily to keep the flow and am I concentrating enough on planning and organizing my work to meet future demands? Steven Covey offers an instructive way to keep a healthy perspective on these matters. He asks us to keep a detached attitude and to simply carve up our work and our personal objectives into four quadrants. Take a look at your priorities. What's urgent, but not important? What's urgent AND important? What's not urgent, but important? What's not urgent and not important? The quadrant that demands the greatest emphasis is obvious. It's the second quadrant. The trick is to spend most of your time working on things that are BOTH urgent and important.

You might say: "Well that's all very fine, but how do I do it?" If you can limit your busy work and concentrate on your daily plan, you will become more efficient and productive in your work. Matters that are important but not urgent like strategic planning, research, major gift cultivation, planned giving get swept aside too often by tedious day-to-day routines. Budget time daily for important priorities. If you need the time, take it. Don't feel guilty about not answering every telephone call the moment it rings; eliminate useless meetings; prepare for the meetings that you to must attend; organize the ones that that you chair. More significantly allow yourself time to do it. Organize your priorities daily by making a "to do" list the night before. Use your peek performance times for creative work; place outgoing calls all at once. Have a plan and stick to it.

Now what about that clutter of paper on your desk or in your in-basket? Here's a practical tip I've used effectively. It works for me. It keeps in mind that "in fundraising, timing isn't everything; it's the only thing". If you need to accomplish a task on a certain day, mark it on your calendar, then take all the paperwork associated with it and place it in an accordion-folder numbered one to thirty-one for the day that you want to work on it. Wow! What a beautiful way to eliminate desk clutter and systematize your work priorities. Some pundits call this organized procrastination. I call it working intelligently!

Efficiency comes in many forms. It comes primarily from learning from what others do well and emulating their good habits; it also comes from diligent observation of what we seem to do inefficiently and making an effort NOT to repeat the same mistakes. Take a hard look at what you do routinely with the view of improving how much time it takes to get it done; it's astonishing how much more you can get done daily when we put into practice this frame of mind.

"By the yard it's hard, by the inch, it's a cinch." Concentrate on one thing at a time. Fundraising is multi-taking taken sometimes to the extreme. When you use your power of focus to get something done, the task will not burden you any longer it deserves.

A Short List of Selected Readings on the Subject of Efficiency in Fundraising

Burka, Dr. Jane, *Do it Now, Overcome Procrastination*

Covey, Steven, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*

Given, Charles, *Super-Self*

Hewlitt, Les ,*The Power of Focus*

McCormack, Mark, *Giving it 110%* ⊡

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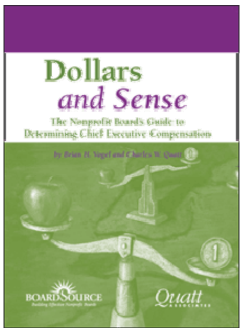
National Philanthropy Day

November 15, 2007

In November, the AFP Edmonton & Area chapter hosts the National Philanthropy Day luncheon, where the "Heart & Soul" Awards are presented to outstanding philanthropic individuals and organizations. Nominees are volunteers who fundraise on behalf of charities or provide financial support directly. The goal is to highlight the people behind the giving, the enormous diversity of giving in our community, and the charities that garner that support and in turn provide service back to society.

Visit the online nomination process at http://www.afpedmonton.ca/philanday.html (deadline August 31).

BOOK REVIEW



Dollars and Sense: The Nonprofit Board's Guide to Determining Chief Executive Compensation

by Brian H. Vogel and Charles W. Quatt
HD4965.2 .V64 2005

In light of the ever-increasing scrutiny of nonprofit practices, nonprofit boards must be aware of the public perception of executive salaries and benefits packages. In this tricky balancing act, nonprofits need to craft a competitive compensation plan that not only reflects the values and the mission of the organization, but helps to attract and retain the right chief executive for the job.

This book (although American) is a practical guide for nonprofit boards to ensure an understanding of their role in shaping compensation, as well as the specific elements of a compensation plan. In order to meet the public expectation and the goals of the organization, this book will teach board members to:

- Determine an appropriate compensation structure for new and existing chief executives
- Pay attention to other benefits in the package, including bonuses and retirement plans
- Align compensation with the organization's mission, goals and culture
- Understand the marketplace and pass the rest of public and stakeholder scrutiny
- Outline the title, job description, and employment contract for a chief executive
- Link performance measures to mission, not just financial gains

Don't miss the helpful checklists, questionnaires, and an extensive Q & A section.

To borrow this book from Grant MacEwan's Learning Resources Centre, contact Michelle Bezenar, Interlibrary Loans, phone 780-497-5857, e-mail:

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The Resource Centre for Voluntary Organizations is supported by:

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