

**KRONKOSKY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION  
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS**

**TOPIC:** Organizational Effectiveness  
**DATE:** November 7, 2002  
**PREPARED BY:** Eusebio Diaz, Grant Manager

**PARTICIPANTS**

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**Invited Agency Representatives**

- Anne Keever Cannon            Back Door Theatre, Inc.
- Carolyn Chipman Evans        Cibolo Nature Center
- Betty Lebo                        Silver Sage Corral Senior Activity Center
- Tricia Green                    Boys and Girls Club of Bandera County
- Jana Osbourn                    Bandera County 4-H
- Warren Thigpen                Bandera County 4-H
- Kellie Stallings                Connection
- Charles Gallagher            New Braunfels Museum of Art and Music
- Gerry Webb                      Comal County Senior Citizen's Center

**Foundation Staff**

Palmer Moe	Managing Director
TomMcGuire	Grants Manager
Eusebio Diaz	Grants Manager

**PURPOSE**

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The purpose of this meeting is to discuss current and ongoing organization effectiveness issues pertaining to non-profit organizations in an attempt to gain a better understanding of these issues and how they impact your organization. Specifically, the purpose is to define the attributes of well-run organizations, to identify barriers to improving organization effectiveness, and to suggest ways to improve a non-profit organization's effectiveness as they pertain to rural communities.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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- Back Door Theatre, Inc., located in Boerne, offers performances in the theatrical arts.
- Cibolo Nature Center is a nature center offering interactive ecological education.

- Silver Sage Corral Senior Activity Center provides nutritional services and social activities for the elderly in Bandera.
- Boys and Girls Club of Bandera County provides youth activities for the county.
- Bandera County 4-H provides youth development activities through agricultural focused activities
- Connections provides youth and counseling services in Comal County.
- Comal County Senior Center provides nutritional services and social activities for the elderly in Comal County.
- New Braunfels Museum of Art and Music provides cultural programming in Comal County.

## **ISSUES AFFECTING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

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- Volunteers are an integral factor in determining the overall effectiveness of an organization.
- Non-profit organizations must deal with an overall lack of infrastructure support, such as computer resources, training, and skills development that are essential in establishing an efficient organization.
- Working within the culture of the community, the politics, perceptions, needs, and networks are critical in determining the success of an organization.
- Professional skill development, such as time management and motivation, to become effective administrators, is often lacking. Administrators rarely learn how to develop subordinate staff.
- Hiring and keeping quality staff is a critical issue for non-profit organizations.
- An effective, working Board of Directors that can provide sufficient support is often lacking.

## **OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

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### **Volunteers**

- Working with all volunteers can be difficult with follow through—things often have a tendency to fall through the cracks.
- Volunteer training requirements vary by organization.
- A volunteer coordinator can make a tremendous impact in coordinating volunteers; managing their time and efforts; nurturing, building skills and relations with these key members of their organization.
- You have to be creative and work at recruiting and retaining volunteers.
- Maintaining open communications is essential.
- Coordinating projects with only volunteers is challenging.
- Volunteers from churches have proved to be very effective and committed.
- Some businesses have participated in programs that allow its employees to volunteer during the workday
- Assess and use volunteer skills

## **Staff related issues**

- Recruiting and retention of qualified individuals.
- Ability to provide competitive wages and benefits.
- Hiring staff to work daily issues while freeing up the Executive Director's time for other requirements.
- Constantly working through staff turnover.
- Providing supervisory staff training in the area of people management skills.
- Providing technology training; especially in the areas of web maintenance and technology planning.
- Non-profit organizations need help keeping good staff, as people will go where there is more pay.

## **BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

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- Board members do not always possess the expertise in organizational management. Often they are experts in their own field but do not have extensive business knowledge. Having members on the board with extensive business expertise is essential.
- Ongoing skill development must occur to keep a working board effective.
- Periodic planning sessions are important to address particular trends and issues faced by an organization. For example, a planning session was conducted following the Kronkosky meeting with funded organizations addressing the funding that will be available in 2003. This session was focused on diversifying revenue streams, especially earned income, to be able to maintain a level of revenue sustainability.
- The Texas Commission of Alcohol and Drug Abuse has an excellent board training video that highlights a board's responsibility.
- Mentorship of a new board member by a senior board member might be something to consider helping in the development of all new board members.
- An organization needs a board with members that represent a variety of skills and experiences.
- Board recruitment and retention is an ongoing issue. Since many new board members are recruited through current board members, diversification becomes an issue.
- Boards often have a difficult time understanding their roles and get involved with day-to-day operations instead of planning issues.
- The loss of funding has actually resulted in the board focusing on funding challenges as opposed to operations.
- Unfortunately, often those that an organization is there to serve are rarely consulted for feedback or involved in the board.

- Funding to support board training has been very helpful to this organization. Her board in the past did not understand that there is certain processes involved in grant writing and securing funding.
- Board members are strongly committed, especially in wanting to help children. However, because they are busy, they are not always aware of ongoing matters. Emails and messages are sent, but the flow of communication tends to go outward, with little feedback or acknowledgement that the message was received.
- Board recruitment can also be a challenge, especially in small communities where strong, established community networks often dictates who gets on a board and stays on a board.
- These networks can be very strong. Members can be on a board for over 40 years and miss a significant number of meetings, but because of who they are, are kept on the board.
- Although by-laws might exist requiring a member to attend certain numbers of meetings, these by-laws are rarely enforced.
- Removing board members or asking them to step down can have deep repercussions to the organization because of the ties the member can have in the community.
- Getting board members to set aside personal agendas can be a challenge. Personal agendas can affect actions and decisions that may not be in the best interest of the organization and those it is intended to serve.
- Board and staff both need to understand the roles of each and how to best work together. However, it is best that boards not get too involved in the day-to-day activities of staff.
- Board development is needed so that they can incorporate some responsibilities and functions. Executive directors already wear too many hats, trying to oversee many aspects of the organization.
- A good board member should be expected to commit to actively participate in some capacity. However, an executive director needs to know how to best manage such group so that they are challenged, properly engaged, and are satisfied with their involvement.
- Professional board and organizational capacity building is needed to help facilitate planning to address the key needs of the organization.
- Perhaps funders can urge boards to participate in development and planning so that the importance of these activities can be conveyed.
- Boards must also commit to adhering to by-laws instead of constantly changing them or ignoring them altogether.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DEVELOPMENT**

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- Time management is a critical need for all staff, but especially so for executive directors.
- Training is important but more so is technical assistance. Someone who can meet with directors and provide guidance with things such as grant writing. For example, the Nonprofit Resource Center has resources on potential funders but it would be helpful to have someone who could provide you more insight into who might be more inclined to fund programs in the organization's professional area.
- Any training is helpful. Her organization provides plenty of training opportunities. However, finding the time to take advantage of these opportunities has been difficult.
- Affiliated groups, such as the Texas Network of Youth Services can provide executive director training and technical assistance
- Has had no formal training on running a nonprofit organization. Although she has been a manager in the private sector, there are challenges within the nonprofit world that do not exist in the for profit world, such as managing volunteers.
- Time management and strategic planning go hand-in-hand. It seems that so often she finds herself in crisis mode. Working with the Board to develop and adhere to a strategic plan will help executive directors with their time management issues.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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- Marketing in the rural community is challenging. It seems that many more people read the San Antonio paper than do the local newspaper. So getting the word out to the community can be difficult.
- Organizations have limited expertise in marketing to promote programs the most appropriate way.
- The homepage for the organization has been very effective.
  - They have registered over 1,000 people have accessed the website, not just hits but actual downloaded and printed information.
  - This is showing that people are accessing information when it is most convenient for them.
- Income development is always an issue in a small community. People are good at giving but the community is limited in its giving because it is small.

- Public awareness is constantly ongoing to inform the community about the organization and the services they provide.
- There is an organization, the Public Relations Society of America that provides professional marketing support pro bono.
- A local group is planning a nonprofit day for all nonprofit organizations.
- The event will serve to recognize organizations that provide quality programming in the community and promote their services to the community.
- Sharing resources and information through affiliated groups, such as the Alamo Area Council of Governments has been helpful.
- Local governments can also have a tremendous impact on a nonprofit. Funding decisions, for example, that are made with political biases can undermine organizations that do not get involved in the local politics.
- In a small community, as few as 300-400 families might provide financial/volunteer support, but unfortunately they carry the full load of the community.
- Local businesses are also feeling overwhelmed by the requests for support by nonprofits in the small community.
- Collaborative efforts also need to be developed for the sharing of limited resources and expertise. For example, shared marketing opportunities can help maximize efforts.
- Establishing a website, disseminate information, and determine needs assessment for the community.