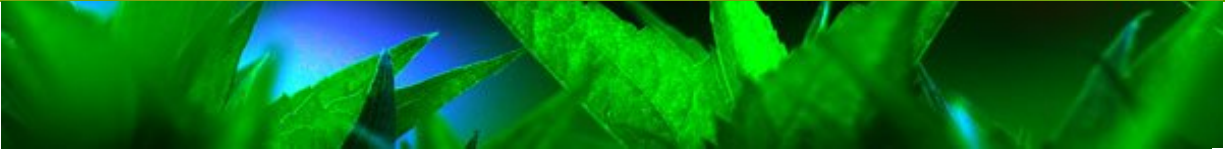


Tip\$ & Treasure\$ Weekly

November 21, 2008

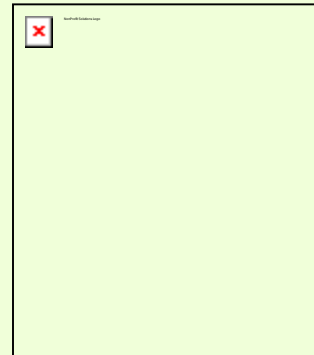


HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

(Due to the holiday next week, we will take a short break and publish again on December 5, 2008.)

In this week's edition...

- Ten Characteristics of Excellent Nonprofit Consultants
- Budget Planning? Consider the Stargazer Club
- Workshops, Events, Seminars and More!
- Job Announcements
- Quote of the Day



TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF EXCELLENT NONPROFIT CONSULTANTS

With multiple demands and many opportunities to serve people in need, wouldn't you like to know who could help your organization? In the current economic and social climate, nonprofits are under increasing scrutiny for financial accountability. More and more nonprofits are competing for scarce resources, while leaders of nonprofits search for efficient and effective ways to continue to make a difference in the lives of people they serve.

Do you want to spend your money wisely with value-added results? Do you also want to hire consultants who can deliver those results? How do you know who is the right person for your organization? Below are ten characteristics of excellent nonprofit consultants, who can help you to develop, sustain or build greater capacity for your organization.

Has sector experience

Some consultants have broad experience in working with both for-profit and nonprofit organizations; some also have success with government agencies or educational institutions. Most important is that the consultant understands the

nonprofit sector, and has worked with a variety of nonprofit organizations. Understanding the sector includes awareness of the needs of organizations and support for the charitable missions of nonprofits.

Is responsive

Consultants realize that they cannot be all things to all people; so excellent consultants are part of an extensive network of colleagues who have various areas of expertise. Being able to respond quickly to a nonprofit leader's request is critical. Delays can be costly for organizations that work within funding constraints and guidelines, and that may need results to ensure continued funding. An excellent consultant is sometimes able to match the organization's needs with the best resources, and as such, can be an important broker as well as a provider of consulting services.

Engages in diagnostic listening

An excellent consultant engages in diagnostic listening. Clarity and agreement on where to start the work and what the intended results are for the organization are essential aspects of the relationship between the consultant and the client organization. Listening for possibilities allows the consultant to frame the issues or concerns into a coherent, mutually agreed-upon proposal for change.

Is collaborative and facilitative

No one knows the organization better than the organization itself, but sometimes its view is clouded by day-to-day realities. Organizational intelligence or wisdom, however, guides the work of the consultant. Excellent consultants value the collaborative and facilitative roles that they must play in order to fully engage the client in the work.

Honors and acknowledges resistance

Consulting almost always involves managing change, and with change comes resistance. Since resistance is a natural component of the change process, much like getting older is a natural part of continuing to live, an excellent consultant honors and acknowledges resistance. Resistance can be useful to a change process because it alerts both the consultant and the organization that some aspect of the process may be ineffective or does not have broad agreement.

Offers objectivity

Managing resistance requires objectivity. An objective consultant is able to listen to both board and staff, to value multiple perspectives, and to articulate the areas where there are both opportunities for change and resistance to change.

Has access to extensive resource support

Excellent consultants keep abreast of nonprofit sector trends and continually expand their network and connections to human and information resources. Excellent consultants have access to the latest research on topics that nonprofits care about, and can provide data and information to guide an organization's decisions or help to set priorities. Consultants have access to databases, studies and professional colleagues who keep them abreast of best practices among similar organizations in the sector and in other industries.

Values diversity

Excellent consultants not only respect the mission and values of the organizations they serve, but also the recipients of the services that the organizations provide. Valuing diversity requires a sensitivity to and awareness of the organization's geographical environment, history and strategic directions. Not considering diversity in the change process can be detrimental to the success of the project.

Thinks conceptually

From the initial meeting or telephone conversation with a client until the closure of the project, the consultant engages in the artistry of consulting—paying attention to where the organization is stuck; recognizing the tension in the organization between what is currently happening and what it wants to happen; and identifying what the organization has the energy, willingness and resources to change.

Is focused on results

Excellent consulting is an investment for the consultant and the organization. Just as most investors look for a return on their investments, nonprofits want to know that if they deliver a program or service, there will be a positive impact on the population they serve.

Excellent consultants want positive results for both the organization and, ultimately, the organization's clients. Consultants too make an investment; their return on the investment is...

- A stronger more vibrant organization with greater visibility and recognition through marketing and branding
- Better leadership and board governance
- Alignment of programs and mission
- Better organizational structures

- Financial accountability
- Efficient processes and systems
- Improved technology planning and management
- Exemplary ethics
- Positioning for advocacy

Knowing when and how to seek outside expertise is critical to a nonprofit's success. Knowing whom to hire for a project is just as important for successful results.

This article has been edited. The entire article can be viewed at the [Georgia Center for Nonprofits](#) website. The author, Eleanor Hooks, Ph.D., is a consulting fellow at the Georgia Center.



BUDGET PLANNING? CONSIDER NPS' STARGAZER CLUB

If your nonprofit is on a calendar fiscal year and you're looking for a way to plan for affordable consulting services in 2009, take a few moments now to explore the [Stargazer Club](#).

The Stargazer Club is designed to turn budget friendly investments into a bank of consulting time that can be used for a variety of important services you can utilize anytime in the future.

Learn more about it at the [NonProfit Solutions NW](#) website or call 360.866.3638.



WORKSHOPS, EVENTS, SEMINARS AND MORE!

NonProfit Solutions NW is hosting this Fieldstone Alliance webinar at no cost to the participants. We are limited to 25 so respond quickly to sstahl@nonprofitsolutionsnw.com.

Moving to a More Sustainable Revenue Model

Assess your current revenue sources and learn about non-traditional and emerging revenue options.

Growing competition for donor dollars is motivating many nonprofits to look beyond long-standing practices toward new revenue models. Financial strategy expert Tom Triplett will show you how to better understand your current revenue model and

evaluate new revenue sources.

You'll learn how to use the "Revenue Matrix" tool to take a critical look at your revenue options. You'll use the Tool to rank the options using evaluative factors that you select as being most appropriate for your organization.

You'll also learn about non-traditional and emerging revenue sources for nonprofits. The goal is that you'll come away with a fuller understanding of revenue options, a process for evaluating those options, and a start toward a revenue system that is diverse, productive, and ultimately sustainable.

Presenter: Tom Triplett, Principal Consultant, Fieldstone Alliance

Date: December 2, 2008

Time: 11:00 am -12:15 pm. (followed by a 45-minute post-webinar group discussion)

Cost: FREE

Location: EXIT Realty Boardwalk has donated the use of the conference room adjacent to their offices and above Budd Bay Cafe at 525 Columbia Street NW, Olympia, WA.

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**The Nonprofit Center presents  
Grantmaker's Roundtable**

WHEN: Thursday, December 4, 7:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Sheraton Tacoma Hotel Bicentennial Pavilion, Tacoma, WA

Meet with regional grantmakers to learn firsthand their priorities and procedures for funding. This is a "musical tables" event during which each participant will be able to sit at a table with four different grantmakers during the morning. Fifteen to twenty grantmakers are expected to participate. Also featured will be the "Grant Doctors" and a Mini-Grant program with a panel presentation.

For more information visit [The Nonprofit Center](#) .



**JOB ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None to report this week.



**QUOTE OF THE DAY**

Energy and persistence conquer all things. Benjamin Franklin (1706 - 1790)

