



[Organization]

[Organization Mission Statement & Goals]

[Website]

State of Affairs

[Date]

In speaking with staff and board members [Names] of the [Organization], it quickly becomes clear that they are all passionate about their critical mission work. In reviewing materials prior to our conversation and in meeting with some of their stakeholders, it becomes evident that the organization has strong leadership. [Name] is a powerful and confident executive director and the organization is built around their style, vision, and schedule. They are in the process of updating and consolidating their financial management practices and this should remain a high priority. They are also in the process of conducting an annual audit; have three full-time permanent staff; and maintain committed contract staff (primarily teachers).

Our conversation focused on their current sustainability practices, infrastructure, revenue and expenses, as well as on the steps they need to take to raise more money. The organization has [X Number of] key programs, innovative and necessary programming, a track record of successful outcomes, and local name recognition. [The Organization], however, is suffering from a lack of some basic social profit structures essential to their continued success and future sustainability.

They need to give serious thought to the development of a board of directors that has the requisite experience and understanding of their role. [Name] would benefit from an executive coach to assist them in helping to leverage their experience and passion in a way that builds the leadership of their competent staffmembers. The program has ambitious goals, but will benefit from slowing down and focusing on building infrastructure and expanding the leadership circle. If [Executive Director] were to leave tomorrow, I believe the program would suffer tremendously, and could cease to exist.

Further, the program needs to operate with a greater level of transparency. It is difficult to fully understand the organization's goals and objectives as they seem to shift according to the needs as articulated by the leadership. [The Organization] needs a strategic plan, developed by stakeholders, and approved by a functioning board.

[The Organization] is a necessary piece of the social profit sector operating in [Counties] in [State]. The organization is already achieving a great deal of success; and strategic infrastructure and capacity building investments will ensure that the program is able to continuing meeting the needs of the countless young people who could benefit from its innovative, hopeful programming.

Key Recommendations

01. Establish a New Executive Board

The existing board is non-functional (except when it comes to some program-related tasks) and needs to be rebuilt as soon as possible. They have not met in some time and need to meet to exercise due diligence in terms of legal and financial oversight, policy development, etc. Those board members who are still active should be moved into an advisory capacity. As you bring the young person you have back into active status (on the executive board), you should bring on a second young person as well so as not to set the first young person up to fail. Your board should also take responsibility for updating and approving new bylaws for the organization. I will attach a set of draft bylaws for your use.

02. Hire an Administrative Staff Person

It is clear that the current workload is exceeding the current capacity of the staff and funds should be identified soon to hire a full-time administrative staff person (with limited financial management experience). This person can support day-to-day office administration, including coordinating internal aspects of the organization's financial management and bookkeeping.

03. Do Not Add New Programs at the Present Time or Without Additional Funding

With only [X Number of] staff people, a non-functioning board, a federal contract and a limited funding base presently, it is not advisable to add ANY new programs at the present time. The organization should not expand beyond [counties]. [The Organization] should focus first on internal management and basic capacity building strategies.

04. Create "Point of Entry" Concept Event

The weekly (or biweekly) "Go Tour" events that we discussed seem like a good fit for [The Organization]. These one-hour events are not "Asking" events, but rather are intended to give you the opportunity to get permission from attendees to build relationships with them over time. They should be short, provide attendees with basic information about your programs, and have an emotional hook. It would be terrific to have young people involved in these events. As this is your five-year (incorporation) anniversary, that could be an interesting theme for these tours. The tours should include a mix of current supporters and targeted "new recruits."

05. Create Targeted "Asks" Using Existing Programs

In preparation for asking events and direct mail solicitation, the organization should create a giving framework which includes various levels of giving (tied to existing programs, etc.). For example, investors should be told that an \$800 investment will allow [X], \$2,500 gets [Y], \$500 pays for [Z], etc.

06. Establish New Financial Management Protocols & Complete Audit Process

Ensure that the new bookkeeping system is in place as soon as possible. Train staff in how to correctly code invoices, bills, etc. Ask for an up-to-date chart of accounts. An annual audit and a clear, annual, organizational budget should be priorities for completion by the end of 2006. Transparency is the key.

07. Review All External Communications for Clarity, Accuracy, Brevity, Grammar, and Spelling

A review of program applications, newsletters, direct mail, etc. suggests that the organization has a basic understanding of how to present its work and outcomes. Unfortunately, every piece reviewed had multiple typos that for some investors may suggest a lack of professionalism. It is important to identify someone on the staff or board who can review and edit these materials.

Short-Term Action Steps

October 2006

- Breathe 😊
- Appoint [Name] as Acting Board Chair.
- Schedule a Board Meeting to Remove Inactive Members & Approve a Minimum of Four New Members.
— Approach X and Y.
- Schedule Monthly Board Meetings Through the Spring of 2007.
- Begin Hosting “Go Tour” Point of Entry Events at the [County] Location.
- Make Follow-Up Calls to All Tour Attendees.
- Begin Holding One-Hour, In-Person, NO Interruptions-Style Staff Meetings (Rotate Facilitation Among Staff).
- [ED] Should Have 1-on-1 Meetings with [Staff] Every Other Week.
- Create a Clear Organizational Chart & Annual Budget to be Shared Internally.
- A Bookkeeper Should Complete Monthly Financial Reports to be Shared With All Staff and Board.
- ALL Staff Complete Provided Program Status Report Templates (Each Staff Member Completes Two).
- Staff Complete the Team Types Activity at a Staff Meeting.
- Identify a Strong Editor to Review ALL External Correspondence.

November 2006

- Staff Reviews & Provides Feedback on Program Status Reports with Goal of Completion by Month’s End.
- Schedule Board Roles & Responsibilities Training (Craig will Conduct).
- Continue Hosting “Go Tour” Point of Entry Events at the New [County] Location.
- Consider Holding a No-Asking “Thank-a-Thon” (See Provided Sustainability Handout for Details & Script).
- Create an Annual Development Plan (Templates on My Website).

December 2006

- Staff Uses Completed Program Status Reports to Develop Draft Logic Models (Same Staff Draft Two Each).
- Staff Reviews & Provides Feedback on Logic Models with Goal of Completion by Month’s End.
- Host a Major “Asking” Event.
- Send a Special Year-End Holiday Appeal the First Week in December.
- Send Thank You Letters to Everyone Who Invests Within Two Weeks of Receiving Their Money.

Institutional Development & Capacity Building Grant Proposal Ideas

Management Assistance

[The Organization] could benefit from long-term strategic planning assistance which includes a focus on increasing sustainability through the development of individual donor-based fund development activities. Locally, the [Name] Foundation provides management assistance grants (Guidelines Attached) and I think [The Organization] would be an excellent fit with their funding priorities. Specifically, they fund efforts that:

- *strengthen executive and board leadership;*
- *undertake planning and assessment; or*
- *improve financial management and planning.*

Your application could include the following:

- Creating an annual development plan that prioritizes individual investor-based strategies;
- Creating a strategy for identifying 200 current “hot” investor prospects as well as 300-500 potential prospects (with an interest or connection to the organization);
- Preparing a series of direct mail appeals to your “House List*” and one prospecting appeal.**
- Purchasing database software to allow for mailing to and tracking these investors.

* Your existing list of all current supporters.

** Names acquired from a source with a potentially interested audience (i.e. Subscribers to a local women’s magazine).

Additional Resources

Recommended Resources	Resource Location
Development Plan Template (in Excel)	http://commongroundconsulting.org/resources/index.cfm
Sample Board Recruitment Packet	Attached as a PDF file.
Point of Entry Event Advice (Book Available Here As Well)	http://www.raisingmoremoney.com/
Strategic Planning Materials	http://commongroundconsulting.org/resources/index.cfm
Team Types Handouts	Attached as a PDF file.
Training Design System (for Paulette)	http://commongroundconsulting.org/resources/index.cfm
Sample Bylaws	Attached as a PDF file.
Youth on Board (Organization)	http://www.youthonboard.org
Foundation Management Grant Guidelines	Attached as a PDF file.

“There is Nothing Like A Dream to Create the Future.” Victor Hugo

Prepared By Craig A. Bowman for [Organization], X, & Y.

<http://www.commongroundconsulting.org>