

From this week's readings, I see the need to develop further the following Leadership Competencies:

1. Effective Communications
2. Resource Development, Financial and Human (Fundraising)
3. Legal and Policy Issues
4. Organizational Development (Teaming)

Effective Communications:

I am reading articles on developing a communication strategy embracing social media along with articles concentrating on fundraising in developing strategies for grant writing and building a donor base. This relates to developing my competency in Effective Communication. In an effort to help our board develop further, I am sharing with them what I am learning as it relates to developing our basic communications strategy, especially in light of what has transpired recently with the Susan G. Komen Foundation and its interaction with Planned Parenthood. I discuss what I am learning as I noted above with members of our board by sending them reading digests with links to all the articles that I have read. Finally, I keep track of what I am reading in two ways by indexing the articles that I read and send to my board in my learning journal along with saving full copies of the articles on to my computer.

We will need to consider how we communicate with our potentially diverse donor base. We will be entering possibly a highly controversial area of public debate concerning the Holocaust, so we need to consider not only how to "get our message out" but we also need to think about how we communicate with our donors. My question to us is who controls our message or who shapes the message about our mission/purpose or what we do in our mission/purpose?

If we are not vigilant about our mission and how we communicate, someone or some organization may hijack it for their own purpose and advance their own agenda either knowingly or unknowingly.

Regarding the development of a media strategy, we have been developing a web site for about a year. It is not well developed yet as it is being built by volunteers. I have written and distributed several press releases and use a Facebook page for our foundation to post news, articles, and photos. We have about 45 followers, which is not much, so I would like for us to look at using Social Media (Facebook and Twitter) more effectively. I read an article this week about Twitter, *Communications for Smaller Nonprofits in the Era of Twitter* (Mort, 2012), which puts the use of this social medium in a new light. Mort writes:

Over the last few years, the world of communications has simultaneously become both more accessible and less manageable. With the explosion of social media came the democratization of communications – one Tweet can reach more people than a press release, and a Facebook post can receive just as much attention as coverage in traditional media.

This change in how news gets out can benefit smaller nonprofits that may not be budgeted for large communications outlays. But just because social media is accessible to all of us does not mean it should be approached without an airtight strategy.

We need to develop an airtight communications strategy using every possible media outlet in order to raise awareness of what our foundation is doing as well as build our donor base.

I would also like for us to look at mobile giving using smartphones and texting. I read an article also this week titled, *New Deal Helps Small Charities Use Text Appeals*, that highlights the fact that “small charities will now get more opportunities to conduct low-cost fundraising efforts by text message” (Flandez, 2012). New guidelines have been set in place that will “make mobile-phone companies more willing to allow charities to use their networks to seek large gifts by text or solicit monthly text donations from supporters” (Flandez, 2012).

Resource Development, Financial and Human

As, I wrote in my post, I am leading in the development of a non-profit organization. One area in which I must develop is expertise in raising funds. Even though a non-profit is not for profit, it is a business and it has to make a "profit" in the sense that we have to have income (funds) in order to operate our organization. One of our board members shared with me that he has never been a part of an organization that had to start from zero before and it was an eye opening experience for him. He realized as I already have that there is a great deal to do and there are no structures in place to do it.

Consequently as one who is tasked to lead this process, I would like for them to know that I am learning as I go and sharing with them (our board members), what I learn, as I learn it. In many ways, this is not unfamiliar ground for me. As a missionary many of us shared the feeling about our work that it was kind of like we were building a car while it was rolling, while having no idea what the car was really supposed to look like. Leading a non-profit is kind of like that.

I am competent in developing and casting vision, mobilizing and developing a team, securing and developing resources (volunteers and finances for projects), as well as, developing mission (purpose), objectives, goals and plans, so based on my prior expertise, I have developed a I have developed a great deal of trust with the people who now serve on our board. I believe that I have credibility (Hughes, 2012). However, I lack technical expertise in raising funds for our non-profit. Therefore, I see my greatest need currently is to learn how to build a donor base, write grants in order to raise funds from both the public and private sectors for operational needs (development) and for project needs (what our organization does). Accordingly, from Hughes (2012) I need to increase my "knowledge and repertoire of behaviors" that I "can bring to bear to successfully complete" (p. 278) my particular task of fundraising.

To this end, I am building my technical competency knowledge base in organizational leadership by reading almost daily a digest of articles from two primary sources: LinkedIn Today and eJewish Philanthropy. Hughes (2012) states that "one way to build your organizational knowledge is by regularly reading industry related journals, annual reports, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fortune*, *Inc.* or various Web sites" (p. 279). Furthermore these two sources link me

from time to time various Journals such as the *Harvard Business Review* and specific non-profit orientated Web sites, such as *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*.

The articles that I have been reading most recently primarily are based on organizational leadership of non-profits and philanthropy (donors and fundraising). I have already begun active experimentation by researching and writing letters of inquiry to four potential grant possibilities. I have received three rejections to date, but I am not deterred. I plan to take a grant writing course in the near future.

Legal and Policy Issues

We must also produce a revised version of the by-laws of The Matzevah Foundation sometime this spring (2012) and will begin the discussion about how to go about it this weekend. So, I would like for us to look at problem solving as discussed in Hughes (2012). Particularly, I would like for us to look at specific steps in solving problems (Hughes, 2012, pp. 306 – 309):

- Identifying Problems or Opportunities for Improvement
- Analyzing the Causes
- Developing Alternative Solutions
- Selecting and Implementing the Best Solution
- Assessing the Impact of the Solution

In light of policy issues we need to address how we cooperate or partner with others and define what are partnering and cooperative relationships, as we need to be careful about competing agendas. We must resolve this issue as well this weekend and will discuss the following article, *Making Partnerships and Cooperative Relationships Work* (Donshik, 2012). It is important to note that there is a difference between a cooperative relationship and a partnership. A cooperative relationship is characterized by two nonprofit organizations working together without drafting a formal agreement.

Organizational Development (Teaming)

The difficulty in leading a non-profit is the fact that depends upon volunteers, who lead busy lives. Nevertheless, we must find a way for us to do all that we need to do. I have been increasingly and methodically developing and shaping what we are doing. Now we are to the point of defining tasks and functions. This will be one of the items that we plan to cover this weekend. To this end, our secretary has taken it upon herself to ask all board members to do a DISC and Strength Finders assessment in order for us to see how we are gifted in order to help us begin developing roles and procedures.

Based on information obtained from Wikipedia, the DISC assessment ("DISC assessment," 2012) consists of :

- Dominance – relating to control, power and assertiveness
- Influence – relating to social situations and communication

- Steadiness (submission in Marston's time) – relating to patience, persistence, and thoughtfulness
- C(or caution, compliance in Marston's time) – relating to structure and organization

Once we know our strengths and what are personality preferences are, we can focus on who might be best suited to deal with fundraising (among others) task.

In the short-term, however, I would like to develop some creative alternatives to fund raising for the non-profit and to this end, I will be leading our board in a brainstorming exercise (Hughes, 2012, p. 310) this weekend (Friday and Saturday) at our annual board meeting. As I mentioned, I have sent them everything that I have read about the topic of fundraising for non-profit organizations, so that we cooperatively develop strategy for solving this problem, using our gifting (teaming) in developing our creativity as pointed out in Hughes (2012) by “seeing things in new ways, think in terms of analogies, and try putting an idea or problem into a picture rather than into words” (pp. 309 – 313).

References

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