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8 Keys to Successful Organizations and Development!

There are all kinds of groups and organizations doing amazing things throughout the country. Some are more successful than others. What are the elements of a successful organization and development program? Read on for the answers.

1. A Compelling Vision – All successful organizations need to have a vision that they can share with others. And the vision must be expressed in the most compelling terms possible. What’s your group’s purpose? Now put flesh on it. Paint a picture of the outcomes your group produces. If you’re a college prep school, then your mission may be to help young people reach their highest potential spiritually/emotionally, intellectually, socially and physically/athletically. Paint a picture of what successful outcomes look like in all of those areas. Or, give examples of young people who’ve grown and changed spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically through your programs. What do your success stories look like if you’re a school, a church, an environmental organization, a family support organization, a civic organization...?

2. Plan, Plan, Plan – An organization that wants to be successful and have a future must plan. What is your overall goal? What are your sub-goals? What are the steps you can take in the next one, three and five years to reach your goals? Include all segments of your organization in your planning and goal setting. And after you’ve created your plan, revisit it monthly, quarterly and yearly.

3. A Quality Product – Successful organizations must aim for the creation of quality “products” and outcomes. Whether those products are software programs, cars, graduates, healthy families, sustainable environments, vibrant cities or... What are you creating? How can you improve your product/outcome? How can you move from your current level to a higher level? What are the steps to higher quality outcomes?

4. Expert Management – Well-run organizations need visionary leaders and effective management. Are your leaders good at communicating with the public? Are they able to “cast the vision” and remind everyone of your lofty goals? Are they able to inspire and mobilize others toward the achievement of those goals? Are they respectful and enlightened in their leadership? Are they good and efficient stewards of all the organization’s human, physical and financial resources? Good leaders are respected, inspire others, are humane, provide for the harmonious working of the members, oversee the quest for excellent products, services and outcomes, and are good stewards of all the resources at their command.

5. Broadcast Your Successes and Report to Stakeholders – Effective organizations need to trumpet their successes and report to all their stakeholders. Who are your stakeholders? They are the people interested in your work and outcomes. If you’re a school, your stakeholders may be: students, parents, prospective parents, grandparents, alumni, donors, major donors, community leaders, business leaders, and more. Communicate with all these groups regularly. Focus on what their interests. Use mailings, newsletters, electronic newsletters, annual reports, informational meetings, and more.

6. Build Relationships – Leaders and organizations must build strong relationships with your stakeholders and donors. As you relate to your stakeholders and donors, you will want to know who they are, their stories, their gifts, their stakes in your organization and its outcomes, what lights them up, and how they can share their gifts with your cause.

7. Ask for Support – All your efforts at sharing your vision, planning and goal-setting, producing quality “products” and outcomes, managing well, and telling your story prepare you to ask for financial support. Know your donors. Know what lights them up. Know their financial capacity. And don’t be afraid to ask for gifts! If you’re too shy to ask, rest assured there are a dozen people behind lined up and ready to ask them for their gifts.

8. Thank Creatively and Often! – Thank your supporters and donors – all of them – in as many ways as possible. Never take anyone for granted! A true story will suffice. I was working with an organization its second capital campaign. A man made a \$1 million gift to the first campaign. Naturally, the leaders of the organization thought that the donor would be interested in another million-dollar gift. The leaders of the organization went out to meet him and asked him a million dollar gift. He turned them down instantly. Why? You guessed it. He turned them down because – incredibly – he was not thanked for his first million-dollar gift. Through notes, public acknowledgements, dinners, phone calls, cards from children, special mementoes... make sure to thank everyone for their gifts.

If you have found the 8 Keys in Preparing for a Capital Campaign! helpful, then contact us today at VisionWorks - 888.948.1113 or info@visionworksco.com.