

Model Management Functions and Responsibilities

1.0 System Function

The non-profit organizations must organize itself in such a way that it maintains a balance between business and community imperatives. This we define in terms of maintaining the confidence of the community (defined in its broadest sense) and maintaining the confidence of its legislative authorities and funders.

This "confidence" must be maintained with three general groups:

1. the legislative authorities in whose jurisdiction the non-profit organization operates
2. the network of organizations with whom the non-profit organization inter-acts in the delivery of its service
3. the clientele who receive service from the non-profit organization, and by extension the general public as their needs relate to the clientele being "well-serviced".

2.0 Goal Function

All non-profit organizations have goals. They may vary in the degree to which they are intentional, public and effective. Non-profit organizations should organize themselves to articulate a shared vision of the social need they seek to address, why they believe the need exists, the service strategy they prefer in addressing the need, the resources they require to successfully address the need, and how they will determine their effectiveness.

This vision must be operationalized into plans, policies and procedures, and be committed to by all organizational members.

3.0 Resource Function

Non-profit organizations must acquire resources, allocate them within the organization (budget, service priorities) and deliver these resources (usually in the form of service) to the community!

Figure I below provides a description of how the responsibility for these management functions may be generally assigned within a typical non-profit organization.

Note: Management here refers to the Board of Directors, administration refers to the senior staff (i.e., executive director, or supervisor) and service delivery

refers to the front-line staff and/or volunteers. It is also important to note that these descriptions are proposed in an overly-simplified way for purposes of illustration. There are areas of overlapping responsibility between the Board of Directors and senior staff, (management and administration) and between senior and front-line staff (administration and service delivery).

The scope and nature of overlapping, and autonomous management responsibilities will be determined by the specific way in which each non-profit will establish its organizational structure and process to maintain a balance between community and business imperatives.

FIGURE II

Organizational Responsibility	Resource Function	Goal Function	System Function
Management (Board)	Acquire Resources	Vision-building	Maintain confidence of funders
Administration (senior staff)	Allocate resources	Operationalize vision	Maintain confidence of other org'n's in network
Service Delivery (front-line)	Deliver "resources" to community	Commit to goals of org'n and community	Maintain confidence of clients

PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Growth through Creativity

- a) Communication with everyone frequent and informal.
- b) Long hours rewarded by low salaries.
- c) Direct control/immediate feedback from community.
- d) Disdain for management activities.
- e) Solidarity, excitement.

3. Growth through Direction

- a) Sustained growth under able directive leadership.
- b) Job assignments become more specialized.
- c) Budgets and work assignments adopted.
- d) Communication becomes more formalized and impersonal.
- e) Staff becomes functional specialists.

2. Crisis of Leadership

- a) Increased number of staff cannot be managed by informal structures.
- b) New staff not part of original creativity.
- c) More dollars needed, new accounting procedures maintain financial control.
- d) Longing for "good olde days".
- e) Need to install business practices and management staff.

4. Crisis of Autonomy

- a) Greater efficiency but staff feel restricted by decision-making process.
- b) Staff develop more knowledge than Board about community needs therefore torn about following directives and taking initiatives.
- c) Need for greater staff autonomy.

5. Growth through Delegation
- a) Decentralized coordinators with greater authority and incentive respond more effectively to changing community needs.
 - b) Reports from staff groups to managers/Board: less direct intervention from above.

7. Growth through Coordination
- a) Use of formal systems to achieve formal coordination and planning.

9. Growth through Collaboration.
- a) Strong interpersonal collaboration in an attempt to overcome overly formal systems.
 - b) Greater spontaneity in management action through teams and the skilful confrontation of interpersonal differences.
 - c) Solving problems through team action.
 - d) Experiments in new practices encouraged.
 - e) Conferences of coordinators held frequently to focus on major issues.

6. Crisis of Control
- a) Board and managers sense they are losing control of a diversified organization.
 - b) Autonomous coordinators prefer to maintain decision making control.
 - c) Need for improved communication systems between Board and staff.

8. Crisis of Red Tape
- a) Proliferation of formal systems begins to exceed their usefulness.
 - b) Everyone critical of the bureaucratic paper system which has evolved.
 - c) Procedures take precedence over problem-solving and innovation is dampened .

Currently, internal conflict and instability is understood as a problem of the specific organization. This perspective helps us understand conflict and crisis as a "normal" characteristic of the growth pattern of an organization as it endeavours to develop the internal capacity to meet increasing challenges in its environment.

The ability of the organization to manage change from one level of environmental complexity and crisis to another, can be thought of as similar to the process of human development. A threshold of change is approached based on the organization having successfully mastered the requirements of its past situation. The increased challenge posed by the environment precipitates a crisis initially because the organization may not agree that there is a crisis, and may not have a clear strategy on how to manage it. It may not have all the competence, confidence of skills and resources to manage the new challenge. Even though some of many elements of the new capacity may be present, it may not have brought them together yet in a combination that allows the organization to make adequate use of them.

The growth response to these crises can be blocked by

- an unwillingness or inability to see that there is a crisis and that growth is required
- an inability or unwillingness on the part of members of the organization to perceive the crisis as being induced by environmental forces external to the organization
- an inability or unwillingness to see crisis as a positive opportunity to engage more complex situations arising from the successful management of past challenges. (The Chinese character for crisis is said to be the combination of the characters representing danger and opportunity. An organizer acquaintance quoted another colleague to say that "conflict is the oxygen of change". This applies equally well to crisis.)
- a willingness to blame ourselves or other members of the organization as being responsible for the organization's problems, through our/their personal lack of time, skills, knowledge or confidence.
- an inability or unwillingness to dedicate organizational resources (time, money, personal energy) to developing the organizations capacity to manage, feeling instead that all resources must be dedicated to "service".
- a fear that change will mean loss, rather than growth or increase in resources, ability and identity

If inability to recognize these various factors was the only problem, then education on these perspectives would remedy the situation and enable people to be more open to growth. There is also unwillingness to change, which is rooted in fear that change will mean loss, and differences in values, experience and beliefs among members can make shared self-interests difficult to see, or impossible to commit to.