

Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS)

TOP TEN LEARNINGS

from the PRAGUE PEER LEARNING MEETING ON MEMBERSHIP

RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

1. Peer-to-peer recruitment is effective; focus on quality recruits
2. Segment members by type and services provided; ensure services match needs
3. Set clear, defined criteria for membership
4. Build a positive image for philanthropy (branding)
5. Make NGOs your partners in philanthropy
6. Develop value/ethics statements for the members
7. Provide a warm welcome to new members after they join
8. Balance transparency with privacy in providing information about members
9. Define the roles of others in follow-up on recruitment efforts
10. Manage the expectations of members in terms of services

CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP DUES

1. Charge what your services are worth
2. Sustainability should not be based on dues
3. Don't let sustainability get in the way of your mission
4. Have a special category of membership for new or emerging organizations
5. Be creative in finding and balancing the resources needed
6. Educate members about the costs and benefits of running an association
7. Establish an award for the best foundation program each year
8. Establish a recognition program for members (with plaques, etc.)

LEADERSHIP IN A MEMBERSHIP ASSOCIATION

1. Involve both the CEO and board chair in outside events such as peer learning meetings, IMAG, etc.; build a good working partnership between the CEO and board chair
2. Listen to your membership
3. Use the right messenger
4. Leadership goes beyond lobbying
5. Be conscious of leadership development at various levels in your organization, including staff, board and membership (in relation to their own communities)
6. Don't assume that board members know everything; board development is important
7. Balance personal and electronic communication with members
8. Balance leadership and service objectives
9. Leadership is/can be just listening
10. Develop leadership within your membership

INTERNALLY DIRECTED SERVICES FOR MEMBERS (Structure & Resourcing)

1. Peer networks are critical; establish them among your members
2. Independent evaluations are important both for assessment of internal operations as well as for capacity-building among members
3. Strike a balance between membership- and staff-driven activities and between membership- and project-driven activities
4. Include a line item for contingencies in your budget
5. Segment services depending on size, maturity, and focus of organizations (however, be mindful of also building a sense of the whole)
6. Establish a database, but be mindful of privacy concerns
7. Use technology to improve member services
8. Differentiate between *demonstrating* value and *communicating* value to members
9. Enhance staff capacity to improve services to members
10. Balance leadership and member services

EXTERNALLY DIRECTED SERVICES AND THE MEDIA

1. Start early, be proactive; build relationships from the bottom up with the media
2. Advocate for the whole sector (including nonprofits), not just philanthropy
3. Prepare firsthand stories and quotes for the media
4. Involve external expertise where appropriate
5. Put members forward; help them to become a resource for lobbying and the media
6. Be patient; be prepared to tell a story about philanthropy many times
7. Staff and resource your external services appropriately
8. Lobbying is not a dirty word!
9. Get involved in establishing government advisory committees on philanthropy and NGOs at both the local and national levels
10. Transparency with members about your work with the media and government relations is essential

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WINGS Peer Learning Meeting on Developing and Working with Membership

Prague, 27-29 November 2000

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