

Governance: Tools for Success

November 29th, 2015

Entities of Public Benefit:

- collective
- nonprofit
- charity
- foundation
- social enterprise – no official definition

170,000 tax exempt organizations in Canada and produce 8% of GDP

21c realities:

- Eating our young – competing with each other
- Competition/struggle for money (grants, gov support)
- Change
- Staying the course (not changing mission, etc) – not losing sight of mandate and goals (the global)
 - o Why are you making certain decisions
- Momentum
- What are the imperatives driving politicians (if you don't understand what's driving them, your efforts won't be considered relevant to politicians)
- Ethics (sponsorships, etc)
- Attracting and retaining members/board
- Narrative
- Politics
- Continuity
- Good ideas club
- Balance between “stay the course” and “forward motion”

Governance gets to the heart of reputation

Uniqueness is the most important thing...

Relevance means uniqueness

Somebody on your board should be politically involved

Build municipal organizations to drive the higher-level organizations as well

21c Paradigm

More horizontal leadership (look at our new government)

Governance is about being the guarantor of the organization/mandate

Quantifying – if you don't have numbers....perhaps surveys with questions like “Do you believe ___ is important” to say things like “90% of people believe _____ is important”

How to get in to “generative mode”:

- Consent agendas – “these items everyone already agrees on, no need to discuss”
- Silent starts
- 1 minute essay – if the meeting were to go on for one more minute here is what I would say (pass on to president to put on to agenda for next time, perhaps)
- Mini-executive sessions (in camera) – work in to agenda on the regular so it doesn't upset/worry staff – provides opportunity to connect through informal open dialogue
- Plenary as committee drive – eliminate as many sub-committees as possible. Instead, create ad hoc groups focused on addressing specific strategic items. Let the board frame the strategic and generative questions for the ad hoc group
 - o Ad hoc could perhaps be replaced by “project”
 - o Working smart not hard
 - o Speaks to engagement
- Idea of a reading list (“here's an article I read last week..”)
 - o Get people in to the same mindset, understand the background
 - o Convergence

Collapsing some formal structures doesn't mean devalue-ing networks and informal partnerships.