



innovative nonprofit solutions

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Our Mission:

The INS Group helps organizations create innovative solutions to build their capacity. We accomplish this by assessing, designing and implementing organizational development strategies that focus on improving effectiveness and enhancing the organization's sustainability. The INS Group was established in 1999 and provides organizational development and capacity building services nationally.

Message from the President



Hello again! It's been a while since you've heard from The INS Group and I just wanted to let you know that we've been working hard behind the scenes to tailor our offerings and assistance to the real and challenging issues facing nonprofits today.

Look out for more from us in the coming weeks!

The changing economic environment in 2011 has led to an increase in competition for donor attention - it is therefore understandable that nonprofit leaders have heavily invested in obtaining funds to sustain their organization's financial capital. However, overly committing to a single area of development may leave other critical areas unattended. This can significantly weaken a nonprofit's ability to adapt to the rapidly changing market, leaving the organization vulnerable to complications.

While focus on fund development is essential for program success, there are several additional items that are important for nonprofit survival. Many organizations have switched to a mindset of "capacity maintenance" and away from capacity building strategies. The steeper the competition, the more competitive a nonprofit must be in terms of the innovative programs and services and the level of skills and expertise among staff. Stagnant program development will only further increase the difficulty of obtaining future funds, and therefore nonprofits should not neglect capacity building in 2012.

Locate the Linchpins

The “linchpins” in a nonprofit organization are those individuals who manage responsibilities that are critical to the organization’s success. Many may believe that the “critical” roles are restricted to that of the Executive Director and the Board, but this is rarely the case. While this may be true in large, for-profit companies staffing 100+ employees, the majority of nonprofits have less than 50 staff members on payroll. This translates to more responsibilities being given to fewer individuals, making the effect of them potentially leaving the organization much greater than that of a larger company. Just as most nonprofits are hyper-aware of their key funding stakeholders, so should they be aware of their key operational players: losing a critical staff member has the potential to be as damaging as losing a key funding source.



Identifying the critical responsibilities within an organization can be difficult, particularly in cases where there is a poor line of communication between support staff and senior-level leaders. In order to ease this process, a nonprofit should map out the organizational roles in order to highlight those crucial to the organization’s success. You can do this by following these steps:

1. Use an employee role chart to identify each staff member and their responsibilities.
2. Locate the roles that act as support pillars for the organization. This is a crucial step to strengthen a nonprofit’s ability to adapt and sustain operations over time.
3. Make a succession plan; a process that all boards should engage in.
4. Use our emergency succession plan checklist to see if your organization would be prepared in the event of an unexpected employee departure.

Email us at info@theinsgroup.com to get your copy.

Locating linchpins is also required when developing a central knowledge bank for the organization - a move needed to prevent knowledge loss during staff turnover periods.

Connect with The INS Group on Facebook!

At long last, our Facebook page is up and running! Find us at: www.facebook.com/INSGrp

Connect with us to receive tips and advice relevant to nonprofits – as well as any information we might like to share along the way. We’ll be using the page to let you know about our webinars and workshops so don’t miss out and “Like Us” today!



How to Turn \$10 into Grant Dollar\$

12 Steps for Successfully Securing a Grant

This CD learning tool is perfect for the grant writing novice or a refresher for the more experienced grant writer. Purchase today on our website:

www.theinsgroup.com

Become a Next:Gen Nonprofit

The speed at which technology has evolved over the last decade has changed the way the world operates. However, many nonprofit leaders have not adapted the way in which their organization functions and delivers services to the way that the community best receives them. In past years, the argument could be made that a small operating budget was to blame for the time lag in the nonprofit sector's adoption of newer technologies. Today, making the change is affordable, with many of the resources available for free on the Internet. Access to supportive software solutions allows nonprofits to replace traditional program capacity with "virtual capacity" - often a much more time and cost-efficient alternative. These tools can help leaders streamline their daily activities, allowing groups to become more organized and increase their operational efficiency. For example, donor management software can be a worthwhile investment for nonprofits. Although many companies offer highly priced programs, a guide from Idealware, which can be found here: <http://bit.ly/H1WqON>, discusses a few lower-cost donor management software options for nonprofits.

During tougher economic times, these solutions are attractive due to their affordability and undeniable practicality. The biggest barrier to adopting these innovative approaches is the refusal to adopt new systems in place of traditional ones. It is critical that your nonprofit moves towards being the best civil servant agent possible, which requires evolving the organization to meet the current needs and preferences of the community. Another great technology resource for nonprofits is the Idealware Field Guide to Software for Nonprofits, which can be previewed here: <http://bit.ly/HmpQRT>. This guide helps nonprofits figure out exactly what types of software solutions are best fitted for their needs.



What Services Does Your Organization Need? The INS Group can provide:

- Strategic planning/scenario planning
- Board development and training
- Succession planning
- Grant writing
- Grant research

Contact us to find out more:
admin@theinsgroup.com

Testimonials

"The INS Group consistently goes above and beyond in meeting the diverse and ever-evolving needs of our new nonprofit. We have benefited significantly from their expertise and seasoned guidance. Our Board of Directors now has a strategic plan, as well as a comprehensive fund development strategy – giving us a roadmap to follow as we navigate the implementation of an effective, sustainable program. Thanks to The INS Group, we are fortunate to have a great set of tools to work with and a firm foundation to move forward in carrying out our mission."

*Tanya Jisa, Executive Director
Benevolence Farm*

Upcoming Classes

Advanced Grant Writing

Wake Technical Community College

April 3, 2012 9 am – 5 pm

Advanced Grant Writing

Duke University Nonprofit Management Program

Durham

April 17, 2012 9 am – 4 pm

Grant Writing/Management and Compliance

Duke University Nonprofit Management Program

Martinsville, VA

April 18, 2012 9 am – 4 pm

Grant Writing

Wake Technical Community College

May 4, 2012 9 am – 5 pm

Advanced Grant Writing

Duke University Nonprofit Management Program

Greenville, NC

May 8, 2012 9 am – 4 pm

Grant Writing

Duke University Nonprofit Management Intensive Track Program

Durham, NC

June 6, 2012 9 am – 4 pm

Prioritize Building Reputational Capital

In the nonprofit sector, proving that your nonprofit has an impact on the community is mostly done to demonstrate to donors the value of your services in order to secure funding. In recent years, donor interests have now shifted towards the amount of reputational capital that an organization holds within the community in addition to the traditional “facts and figures.”



Society as a whole has become one that relies heavily on a “star rating” system. Consumer feedback found on internet marketplace websites, such as Amazon and Ebay, reflect this trend. While consumer reviews do contain valuable comments that can be read by the public, time constraints can often lead to the reputational capital of a product or merchant quickly being judged mostly on the average star rating. This system of public opinion undeniably has a power influence over potential new investors and this trend is mimicked in the nonprofit sector. While impact calculations do have value, the size of “star rating”-type measures, such as the size of your social network, are quickly becoming relied upon as measures of legitimacy in the 21st century.

There are several ways in which you can increase your reputational capital. First, the engagement in social networking is an essential step that must be taken in order to ramp up organizational reputation. According to the authors of *The 2020 Workplace*, the number of Twitter followers or Facebook “Likes” an organization has will majorly influence the decisions of investors in the near future. Although learning and adopting social networking accounts may be intimidating for smaller nonprofits, there are several resources available to help guide you through the decision making process. *Social Media for Social Good: A How-To Guide for Nonprofits* by Heather Mansfield is a great guide to refer to, to help you do this.

Commit to Continual Education

Nonprofit leadership capacity building has traditionally required travel, dedicating time and money to take part in costly retreats, workshops, seminars, etc. in an effort to develop skillsets valuable for the organization. With limited time and funds, this often means that engaging in capacity building events is limited for most nonprofits. However, the Internet has connected the world in a way in which these valuable resources can be shared amongst industry leaders even when living hundreds of miles apart.

The INS Group encourages you to commit yourself to active education in 2012 and to stay current on the latest trends happening in the nonprofit sector. There are many ways to stay informed, including:

- Tuning in to online webinars discussing topics relevant to your organization.
- Podcasts are also a great way to hear information and can even be downloaded on to an MP3 player and listened to in your car.
- Mobile applications, such as the Nonprofit Manager's FAQ Mobile App and others can be downloaded for free onto your smart phone, allowing you to access answers to questions on the go.
- Industry books containing the newest information are frequently published. You could choose to join a group like the Nonprofit Community Book Club which gives 40 % off the list price of promoted books to members. You can also participate in author-hosted discussions about material.



Going to traditional conferences and retreats is still an excellent way to learn, but if time or finances are limited, there are often web-based attendance formats for many of the larger training and research-related events. Websites like www.nonprofitwebinars.com allow you to browse a list of potential topics

and register to attend upcoming online events.

The INS Group encourages you to keep a look out and register for future webinars and workshops by The INS Group later this year.

Upcoming Classes

Advancing Foundation Relationships

Duke University Nonprofit Management Intensive Track Program

Martinsville, VA

June 19, 2012 9 am – 4 pm

Grant Writing 101

Duke University Nonprofit Management Program

Durham, NC

June 25, 2012 9 am – 5 pm

To register for Duke classes visit: www.learnmore.duke.edu/nonprofit/

To register for Wake Tech classes contact:
Heidi Reuter @ (919) 866-5811

New Website

*Our new website is LIVE!
Take a look at
www.theinsgroup.com
Email us at
info@theinsgroup.com
with your comments.*

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