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innovative nonprofit SOLUTIONS

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Our Mission: We help organizations create innovative solutions to build their capacity.

We accomplish this by assessing, designing and implementing strategic fundraising, marketing and management programs for nonprofits, community-based, faith-based and educational institutions and government agencies nationally.

Message from our President



Welcome to the Spring 2007 edition of the Innovative Nonprofit Solutions E-Newsletter! Since our first edition in September 2005, we have received very positive feedback confirming we are on the right track in providing timely topics and resources. In our years of experience, we have seen many changes in philanthropy. We

are committed to seeking answers to the important questions you are asking: **1.** *What are innovative ways (i.e. social ventures) to raise funds when there is so much competition for charitable dollars?* **2.** *How do I ensure I have the infrastructure in place to support my organization and future plans?* **3.** *How do I know which tools and technologies to choose without wasting resources?* **4.** *Where does our organization find ideal prospects for our Board of Directors and how do we recruit them?*

More than ever, The INS Group is committed to help organizations create innovative solutions to build their capacity. In 2006 we saw the results of this commitment – a 10-year plan to help end homelessness in Durham, clients receiving funding after learning how to write effective grants, future leaders in nonprofit organizations learning to manage their resources, and more organizations strategically fundraising and capacity building.

Innovative Nonprofit Solutions E-Newsletter is your first resource for information for the nonprofit sector. Discuss the articles with your peers, register for a **future workshop** on our website at www.theinsgroup.com and let us know how you have implemented what you learned. Send your story to info@theinsgroup.com.

- **Ruth A. Peebles**, President and Founder, The INS Group

Southern SSAWG: Empowers and Inspires Farmers



The Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (Southern SAWG) is the south's leading non-profit creating a sustainable food and farming system. Their mission is: *to empower and inspire farmers, individuals, and communities in the South to create an agricultural system that is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, and humane. Because sustainable solutions depend on the involvement of the entire community, Southern SAWG is committed to including all persons in the South without bias.*

Southern SAWG has contracted with The INS Group to lead funding development coordination. The INS Group will develop a corporate sponsorship plan for the organization's annual conference and will assist with government and foundation grant applications and individual donor development.

The organization's programs and activities help family farms and those working *to develop local, equitable community food programs*. Southern SAWG partners with farmer-based and community-based organizations, policy advocacy groups, educational institutions and government agencies throughout the South to change the systems that perpetuate long-term patterns of injustice in food production, distribution, access, and quality, as well as in the treatment of Earth's precious ecosystems. The organization's network links *more than 100 diverse organizations and thousands of individuals* throughout the 13 Southern states of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. To learn more about Southern SAWG visit www.ssaawg.org.

Social Ventures: Innovative Ways to Raise Funds

Today more non-profits are having conversations about social ventures or social entrepreneurship. Social and community needs grow, while funding from government and philanthropic institutions shrink. These institutions are also asking the question, "What is your plan for financial sustainability?"

The terms social venture and

social entrepreneur are sometimes used interchangeably and may have different meanings to different groups. Because this is a broad topic, this article will focus on examples of non-profit social ventures and entrepreneurs.

OPAL Institute of Technology located in Winston-Salem, NC is one example of how non-profits are waking up to the idea that if they are to sustain and grow, they must have multiple resources; and

a percentage of those resources must come from revenue the organization generates.

Founded by two entrepreneurs, OPAL has found creative ways to generate income. They contracted with an I/T professional who is an expert in repairing computers. When OPAL receives donated used computers they are tested and the computer is either repaired

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"As a newly established organization, having The INS Group assist us with developing a business plan was invaluable.

We were glad to have the experience and professionalism of Ruth Peebles who was able to gather and evaluate a lot of information from many resources.

We are excited about the results and look forward to the work she will do to help our fundraising efforts."

Jim Webb, Board Member, Autism Community Initiative, Inc.

Helpful Websites for Non-Profits Considering Social Ventures:

Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_Venture_Capital

Social Venture Capital Foundation:
<http://www.seedsofchange.org>

npEnterprise Forum:
<http://www.npenterprise.net>

Social Enterprise Alliance:
<http://www.se-alliance.org/>



to serve as a workstation at the center, sold at a discounted price, or gifted to youth who don't have computers in their homes. Through this partnership, OPAL also receives a portion of revenue from computer repair services.

Another way they have created revenue is to sublease space to another company that specializes in the growing VOIP technology as well as lease a conference room for individuals or businesses that need meeting space. This tax season OPAL partnered with a tax preparation service as one of their sites to intake requests for income tax preparation in exchange for a percentage of revenue from tax preparation fees. This has also allowed OPAL to become a resource for tax filers by distributing information and providing a

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bilingual (Spanish) translator. Look in your community and you will find other non-profits who have ventured into social entrepreneurship. Goodwill Industries (shopgoodwill.com) is the first Internet auction site operated by a nonprofit organization), Habitat for Humanity (Habitat ReStore), and many domestic violence agencies have created revenue by establishing outreach stores. You may find organizations generating revenue by providing training seminars or workshops, childcare services (i.e. YMCA and YWCA), research services, or by selling space on their websites.

With their online auction website beginning in 1999, Goodwill reported total sales on the site were more than \$23 million with over 142,000 registered buyers. (Source: <http://www.goodwill.org/page/guest/about/howweoperate/Shopping/onlineauction>)

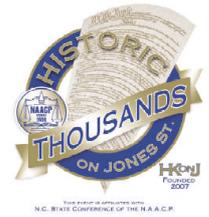
How do you begin? As with any effort it is important to do your research, ask questions, and plan your action steps.

OPAL focused on services and/or products that are tied into their mission of technology education and access. Not only are they able to create revenue but they also benefit from having access to technology experts and services that normally would put a huge dent in their budget.

Consider the following: What service or product can your organization provide that supports what you already do for the community? How can you package that service or product to generate funds? What investment dollars and manpower hours will your organization commit to this social venture? How will you market your service or product so your community knows it can buy from you?

There are many resources to help you create revenue through social ventures. Remember just as you had to go through a process to receive funding from grantors, so too must you go through a process to create social venture revenue.

What is HK on J?



HK on J, **Historic Thousands on Jones Street**, a movement led by the NC NAACP and 60 coalition partners throughout NC at a historic event on February 10, 2007.

Termed "**A Movement, Not A Moment**", the coalition will support various events throughout the state. The INS Group assisted with marketing materials and project management working with student interns and coalition partners.

For more information visit: hkonj.com

Visit our
Workshop Calendar
at
www.theinsgroup.com
to find the next
Grant Writing or
Fundraising
workshops in
your area!

Techie News: Fundraising Software

Fundraising software has become an essential tool in helping organizations become better at fundraising. 10 years ago if you were to survey non profit organizations on how many of them were using fundraising software you may have gotten a confused look or someone may have responded, "What is fundraising software?" That response may have been due to the limited availability of such a product and also the limited understanding of how such a product could be beneficial. Because there are many different software packages on the market, it is important to survey your organization's needs and goals to select the most appropriate software package.

To help you choose the best software package for your organization consider the following five questions and answers:

1. *How much should I spend on fundraising software?*

The investment you make in fundraising software will be determined by your needs and goals as well as your budget. Software packages range from under \$1,500 to over \$15,000. In this price range you will find packages ranging from spreadsheet formats to packages that include contact management features. The packages may also include technical support features such as help desk access, training, and installation and set-up.

To begin the selection process, do your research. Discuss with colleagues what software packages their organizations use, contact the software companies directly and speak to a technical representative as well as a sales representative.

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IRS Reports Data on Non-Cash Charitable Contributions

Data from 6 million 2003 tax returns shows that **\$36.9 billion were given in the form of non-cash donations**. The top three values were:

- Corporate Stock - 37.2% (\$13.7 billion)
- Real Estate – 16% (\$5.9 billion)
- Clothing – 15.8% (\$5.8 billion)

Source: Spring 2006 issue of the IRS publication, *Statistics of Income Bulletin*.

The City of Wilmington Chooses The INS Group to Lead Process to End Homelessness

The City of Wilmington is making an unprecedented commitment to end chronic homelessness in North Carolina's Lower Cape Fear Region. After hearing about their success with the City of Durham in a similar effort, the City of Wilmington chose The INS Group to lead this process.

The INS Group, led by Ruth Peebles as Lead Consultant, is facilitating this complex six-month process by conducting a series of committee meetings, focus groups and public forums. This work will result in a **10-Year Plan** to focus on strategies for prevention and engagement, services and support, transition to independence, and permanent housing.

Community input is key to developing a comprehensive strategy for ending chronic homelessness and reducing all homelessness within 10 years. This substantial undertaking will involve representatives from the health care community, the faith community, the business sector, educational institutions, city and county governments and those who are homeless or previously homeless.

Send questions or requests for information to info@theinsgroup.com.

Do You Know The First Step to Successfully Securing a Grant?

Find out by listening to our **12 Steps for Successfully Securing a Grant CD**.

This effective grant writing learning tool is now available for only \$10.

Visit www.theinsgroup.com to order your CD today!

Board Development – Part 1: Seek and Find



Developing a Board of Directors (BOD) can sometimes make you feel that you are on a seek and find mission. All non-profit organizations have at some time during their development struggled with finding persons willing to serve on their BOD. However, some non-profits seem to have mastered the art of finding and recruiting strong candidates who are diverse in their

age, educational and work experiences, and their ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds. What's their secret? No secret - just strategic planning and consistent implementation of their board development process. Where do you look for perspective directors? Sometimes they are right under your nose.

Ask the question, "Who do you know?" Referrals from current BOD, donors, trusted volunteers, clients or members, and staff are a great way to find candidates looking for opportunities to serve in their community. Ask your BOD to annually identify at least 2-3 potential candidates and periodically request referrals from other members of your organization.

Target professional associations of those professions you need. Does your BOD need the expertise of a CPA, attorney, or marketing and banking professionals? Check the community Who's Who in your local paper for individuals recognized for professional achievements. Another great source is organizations for retired individuals.

Also look to your current volunteer or client base for persons who are passionate and knowledgeable about your organization. These prospects can be a huge asset to your BOD. *Continued on Page 6*

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A technical representative will answer your questions from a technology standpoint of how the software package can be applied in your organization. Of course a sales representative will have the features and benefits knowledge but their focus

will be selling you the product.

2. Besides the software package, what other items will I need to consider as part of my investment?

Making sure you have the systems hardware that can operate the software package and support its features is extremely important. As you are determining your

investment consider that you may need to include the cost of a new or upgraded hardware system.

You may find that training will be needed for your staff and you will have to allow time and invest more dollars. Ask the software vendor about their training programs: a). Will they train on-site?

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"The INS Group has been an incredible asset to our organization. The strategic fund development planning which they facilitated with our organization is clearly going to take us to the next level, both in terms of improving our own capacity and that of our member organizations.

Their knowledge, dedication and professionalism is extraordinary."

Janeen Gingrich, Director
Member Services
NC Coalition Against
Domestic Violence

Want to Learn More About Fundraising Software?

Software Comparison:

1. Tech Soup – techsoup.org
2. Grassroots Fundraising Journal
grassrootsfundraising.org/howto/software.html
3. NonProfit Expert - nonprofitexpert.com/nonprofit_software.htm

Freeware or Shareware:

4. Softonic - en.softonic.com
5. Downloads45 - downloads45.com
6. ShareUp – shareup.com

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b). Do they offer periodic training classes in your city/state/region? c). Are there online classes or webinars? d). Do they offer one-on-one training? e). How long are the training classes? f). Do they provide a hardcopy or softcopy (online) training manual? g). For staff attending training, what level of technical skill or computer proficiency is required?

3. *Which software package is the best for my organization?*

The best software package for your organization will be the one that fits your current budget and supports your current and future funding goals. Software should not be chosen solely on price or just current needs.

4. *Our staff and/or volunteers are not very tech savvy, what must I consider before investing in a software package?*

This is important when selecting software. Take a “technical skills assessment” of those who will manage the data to better determine your training and support needs.

5. *We have a small budget do I really need fundraising software if I already have a good paper (or manual) system?*

Having a good data management system does not require fundraising software. However, using fundraising software as a tool within a good data management system makes the work more efficient and manageable.

Research non profit support agencies who offer discounted software and tech services.

Innovative Ways to Fund Your Fundraising Software:

- Add to your Wish List – let your supporters know your needs
- Submit a grant proposal for a gift in kind to a vendor that sells fundraising software
- Provide marketing at one of your events or on your website in exchange for software



How Effective Is Your Plan for Board Development?

Contact The INS Group today

to learn more strategies on

- Developing BOD Prospects
- BOD Orientation
- BOD Recruitment

919-231-2870 or

info@theinsgroup.com

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Board Development – Part 2: Recruiting

As your organization is identifying a prospective BOD it is essential to strategically approach, introduce, and invite or interview your prospect. Too often an ideal prospect may be apprehensive when too much information is given without inquiring to their interests or when presenting the opportunity in a way that is uninviting (not everyone may be ready to change the world by this weekend).

Approach: The first contact with a prospect should not be a 30-minute speech of why they should serve or why your organization needs them. You want to establish mutual interest – do they have an interest in community service opportunities at this time or in the near future? **Introduce:** The prospect should be introduced to a member of your BOD nominating committee who can ask preliminary questions (i.e. what are their interests) and give brief information about your organization (i.e. when founded and mission statement). **Invite or Interview:** The nominating committee member can then schedule an appointment for an interview or invite them to an event so the prospect can learn more about the organization and meet other BOD members.