

Employee Engagement Among Non-Profit Organizations

ICD Cohort Seven Thesis Project

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION:	3
II. HUMAN RELATIONS	6
HUMAN RELATIONS STRUCTURE:	6
IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RELATIONS:	8
III. EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT	10
DEFINING EMPOWERMENT:	11
AUTONOMY:	12
IMPLEMENTING EMPOWERMENT:	13
VULNERABILITY:	15
IV. INTERNAL INVESTMENT:	18
TALENT IS NOT ENOUGH:	18
FUNDING INTERNAL INVESTMENT:	20
INVESTING IN THE POTENTIAL:	21
RECOGNITION IN THE ORGANIZATION:	23
OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT:	23
V. CONCLUSION	25
VI. PROGRAM EVALUATION	26
ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND:	26
RESEARCH:	28
NARRATIVE:	31
EVALUATION PLAN:	33

I. Introduction:

Think of your favorite charities or non-profit organizations; what do they stand for? What are the core values that motivate them to do good work on a daily basis? For many organizations, the ability to see peoples' lives changed and strengthened through their work is the foundation of their organizational framework. A heart for people can often be found in the organization's mission statement. Yet does that same value translate into the organization's relationship with its own employees?

Non-profit organizations are mission focused. They believe strongly in meeting particular needs through specified aid or work. For example, the need for clean drinking water around the world has inspired organizations such as Charity Water, Puremadi and The Thirst Project. The mission, the need the organization perceives in the world, is the central focus of everything an organization does. The employees are driven and committed. Employees are motivated by the external mission to endure the long grueling hours that often accompany a career in the non-profit industry.

We often hold the expectation that non-profit organizations are filled with sacrificial individuals, who give themselves fully to a specific cause. Although driven by the cause, are non-profit employees not at all interested in financial success? Non-profit employees being financially successful and well developed individuals' are qualities often viewed as a contradiction to the mission of the organization. Yet these same qualities are not questioned in for-profit industries. In fact, many individuals would call financial success a sign of greatness and achievement. Insufficient employee support and engagement is a struggle that many non-profit employees face on a daily basis. Employees' hearts for an organization are not met with a empowering and motivating work environment that invests in employees.

Rachel, an employee for a national non-profit, began her journey to work with youth at a young age. She was devoted. She was consistently present during work hours, and exhausted herself emotionally with the hope that she might make a difference in the lives of youth throughout the community. However, her passion was not nurtured well by the organization that employed her. Although the organizations' heart for youth was equally passionate, it lacked the funds, business structure and intentional strategies to empower and support Rachel..

Fast forward a few years and Rachel is struggling to make ends meet with the small financial compensation she receives through her employment. In fact, the very organization that is dedicated to fighting hunger in local children has its own employees filing for government assistance to put food on the table. The organizations leaders fail to see how the mission of the organization to empower young people, is not in alignment with the very people they employ to carry that mission forward. Rachel realizes that her ability to flourish in this work environment cannot be sustained. Upon completion of her master's degree, her time with this organization will come to an end. Yet Rachel is not alone. Many non-profit employees face the reality that their passion and commitment to the organization is not rewarded at the same level when evaluating pay and resources for employees. Their desire to invest in life-changing organizations slowly diminishes as the reality of the cost of living becomes apparent.

Non-profit organizations are founded on the principle of helping others. Employees spend countless hours fundraising and building relations in order to see their mission come to fruition. Yet the value of serving others is not apparent in their relations to their own employees. In fact, their treatment of their employees contradicts their mission to serve others. However, imagine a world where the dreamers could find empowerment and success in their work place. Would their ability for impact in their career not be exponentially increased?

Thus every non-profit must be sure that the way it treats its employees reflects the organization's mission and values. This thesis project is developed from a survey of best practices surrounding human relations, employee empowerment and internal investment. Drawing from this foundation, I will apply the principles derived from this survey to a program evaluation of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue's Human Resource department. This evaluation will aid the organization toward the development of workplace practices and employee community dynamics that mirror a greater internal consistence with stated organizational values.

Organizations have primarily been reviewed and assessed by their health and performance. A healthy organization consists of collaborations between structured programs, human relations, political agendas and cultural perspective. Healthy organizations do not evolve overnight; their creation takes time, intentionality and the collaboration of multiple people and internal organizational departments. This project provides an understanding of how human relations, employee empowerment and internal investment can transform the success of an organization.

Throughout this project the terms "external" and "internal" motivators will be used frequently. When referencing external motivators for an organization I will be speaking directly on the established mission and vision. For example the external motivator of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue is to empower all young people to reach their full potential. When referencing internal motivators I will be speaking directly on the relationship of the organization with its employees.

II. Human Relations

How an organization relates to their employees is referred to as the Human Relations or the Human Resource Department. Human Relations is a discipline within the Human Resource department which addresses interpersonal behaviors. Human Resource is the heartbeat of an organization as it empowers and equips employees to maintain policies and procedures while creating a healthy work environment. Yet, non-profit employees with Human Resource responsibilities are often underdeveloped and overworked. In contrast, according to *The Human Capital Strategy*, organizations that utilize a strong Human Resource department have a greater ability to influence external motivators (Hall 35).

Human Resource is the practical means by which organizations establish policies and procedures that create structures for employees to be successful. The Human Resource department works in collaboration with employers to establish, build and sustain successful teams of employees. Human Resource' employees also oversee employee relations such as: recruitment and hiring personnel, employee policies, discipline, employee termination, employee activism and wellness, new employee orientation and compensation requirements (Crutchfield, Grant 32). Although Human Resource departments differ depending on the organization, all form the foundation for handling and maintaining employee relations.

Human Relations Structure:

The Human Resource department offers organizations the opportunity to develop structures that support and guide their employees into an empowered work environment. When it comes to working with organizations and people, it is important to understand that predictability is of great value to the organization. When employees have a clear understanding of expectations, it sets a clear path to success within their organization. Author Joan E. Pynes, a successful public administrator and primary contributor to the current policies surrounding

Human Relations, agrees that strategic planning is crucial when facing an ever-evolving workplace. Pynes found that technology, diversity and financial unpredictability are some of the key issues within organizations causing disturbances in daily routines (15). In the face of so much unpredictability, it is crucial organizations have clear standards and expectations in place for their employees.

Human Relations cannot be looked at as an optional expense. It has to be seen as a crucial asset that strengthens the organization and promotes their success. Without it employees are left to question their roles and responsibilities and they lack the support needed to be successful in their position. A strong Human Resource department provides employees with clear expectations and has a strong ability to match employees to positions that suit their skill set. When a Human Resource department is not functioning well, or at all, employees lack an advocate for their personal well-being. This deficit in the organizations' internal structure leaves employees overworked and undervalued.

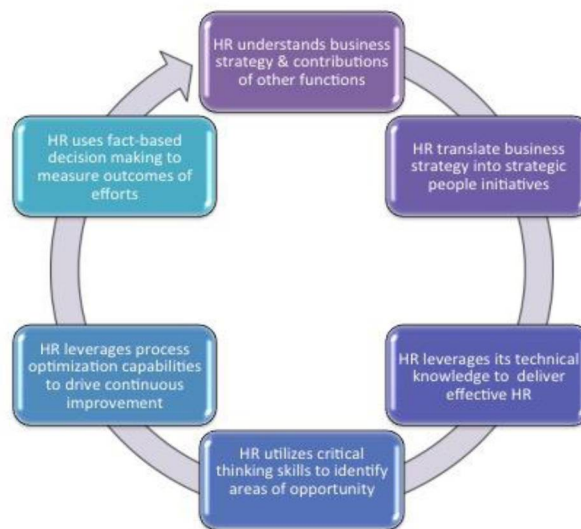
In *Managing Human Resource for Non-profits*, human relations methodology expert Kunle Akingbola illustrates the key issues facing employees today. Race, sexuality, poverty and educational opportunities have become the main conflicts between employees and organizations. These conflicts hinder an organizations ability to successfully complete its mission (Akingbola 57). With so many opportunities for conflict to arise, predictability is extremely important for employee success. By utilizing practical Human Resource practices, a structure is built to overcome these conflicts and empower employees to advocate for justice and equality within the workplace environment. If an organization creates clear expectations, employees are given the opportunity to choose success. Employees will know the consequences if these expectations are not clearly met, which is crucial when dealing with employee termination and often unavoidable

legal responsibilities. Human Relations gives organizations the tools and structure to overcome adversity, implement change and maintain expectations that make organizations not only successful, but strong and effective as well.

Importance of Human Relations:

When exploring successful and unsuccessful Human Resource models within non-profits, it is clear that organizations that fail to develop and sustain their Human Resource department suffer dramatic increase in economic hardships and vulnerability. However, organizations that align their external motivator with their Human Resource department strengthen their entire organization. Below is an Evidence-Based HR model developed by Mark Berry, Vice President of Human Resources that illustrates the potential influence of Human Relations on an organization (See fig. 1).

Evidence-Based HR Model



(Fig. 1)

Frequently non-profits operate on tight budgets focusing primarily on the programs that tangibly help them achieve the external mission of the organization. For example Boys and Girls Clubs of America is a national organization that focuses on developing and supporting youth across the United States. Its budget is specified towards keeping low overhead cost, such as administrative and technical support (“Who We Are”). This focus enables the organization to channel more money towards direct program costs such as after school programs, scholarships and mentorship opportunities. Although this scenario is deemed successful by many non-profits and donors, it fails to address the need for a strong business model and long-term investments.

In order to successfully implement an influential Human Resource Department, non-profit organizations must address the six key personnel issues outlined in the *Small Business Administration publication Human Resource Management*, which exists as a reference for Human Relations requirements. These issues are assessing personnel needs, recruiting personnel, screening personnel, selecting and hiring personnel, orienting new employees to the organization and deciding compensation issues. These six responsibilities revolve around an organizations ability to manage, equip and sustain people. People either make or break an organization. In fact, Peter F. Drucker author of *Managing the Non-Profit Organization*, declares that people are an organizations biggest asset. Drucker explains,

The yield from the human resource really determines the organization's performance. And that's decided by the basic people decisions: whom we hire and whom we fire; where we place people, and whom we promote. The quality of these human decisions largely determines whether the organization is being run seriously, whether its mission, its values, and its objectives are real and meaningful to people rather than just public relations and rhetoric (Drucker 112).

The take way is if an organization engages with their employees it is a clear reflection of the depth in which their mission takes root internally.

A strong Human Resource Department should demonstrate a non-profit's foundational values. Without understanding that Human Relations is a critical investment, an organization will struggle to establish a structure that promotes employee empowerment and internal investment. The Human Resource Department of a Non-profit is a non-negotiable element for achieving the external mission of the organization.

III. Employee Empowerment

Just as Human Relations revolves around an organizations ability to build a practical foundation for their employees, empowerment is focused on the organizations ability to build employee relations and trust. Empowerment is the authority or power to do something. Two examples of employees involved in separate organizational structures will help illustrate this term.

The first employee, Elizabeth, works for a local non-profit that develops a marketing strategy that engages the elderly community. Her overly opinionated and controlling supervisor gives little room for her input. Although she comes from a successful marketing program, the non-profit organization often tosses aside her ideas. The organization is frustrated at its inability to grow. Elizabeth grows tired because she lacks the opportunity to be creative; which was the very reason she began a career in marketing. Elizabeth begins to question her employment with this organization as she longs for the challenge of creativity and collaboration.

The second employee, Seth, also works in marketing at a non-profit but he is given the opportunities to develop the marketing team and his position. He was hired for his proven talent in the industry and is seen as a vital asset to the organization. Although his ideas are often

viewed as risky, his employers support his vision for development. In fact the first marketing campaign Seth released to the community was deemed a complete loss. However, his employers did not confine their assessment of him to this failure. Since his first campaign, Seth is given the resources needed to assess and adjust the marketing approach; learning from his mistakes and gaining the opportunity to grow. Seth is now in the midst of managing the most successful marketing campaign in the organizations history, increasing their revenue by 30% this year.

Defining Empowerment:

Employee empowerment entrusts an organizations mission to the individual employees that make up the organizations infrastructure. Empowerment requires humility from an organization's leaders, and challenges their ability to trust others in carrying out the mission of the organization. Valuing empowerment requires risk and demands concrete action. It is a daily act of believing in employees' abilities to enhance the future of an organization.

According to the *Ethics of Empowerment*, there are three main forms of organizational empowerment: Role, Process and Governance. Through Role Empowerment employees gain decision-making authority over the strategies and unique nature behind their own work. Role Empowerment allows employees to hold autonomy and power over the direction of their employment and gain freedom for creativity in their daily tasks. Process Empowerment offers employees the opportunity to help format and design the organizational process themselves. Governance empowerment however, allows employees to influence the overall direction of the organization. From budgetary to environmental issues, Governance empowerment gives a voice to the individual. This final form of empowerment has the possibility to bring about large and creative impact within an organization (Gandz, Bird 384-386).

Autonomy:

Empowerment gives employees the opportunity to play a key role in the success of the organization, and invest in something larger than themselves, resulting in autonomy. Author and career analyst Daniel Pink supports this idea by urging non-profits to build autonomy within their employees. Pink explains that invested and committed employees who believe in the work they are doing, excel over those who may be naturally talented (Pink 64). Employees who hold autonomy in an organization are often willing to stay engaged through various obstacles that might emerge. With empowerment employees are inspired to invest above the required expectations and begin to embody the values of the organization.

Autonomy is easily stated, but something many organizations struggle to achieve out of their employees. So how does a non-profit gain investment out of individuals who often face burnout, exhaustion and lack of creative freedom? This is the exact question that the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue is currently asking itself as an organization. Through my extensive fieldwork with this organization, I had the opportunity to explore the inner workings of unsuccessful employee empowerment strategies that have a detrimental impact on the investment of employees.

As seen in the attached program evaluation, building autonomy in part-time staff is one of the greatest obstacles the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue faces as a non-profit. Unfortunately, the Boys and Girls Club is not alone in their struggle. Many non-profits are struggling to gain the autonomy needed from their employees, but are often unwilling to make the necessary changes in the organizations internal structure. This struggle is why organizations must implement practical and sustainable empowerment strategies. If empowerment becomes the expectation then autonomy also becomes the reality.

Implementing Empowerment:

The first step to implementing empowerment is gaining an understanding of where your organization currently invests its time, power and energy. This knowledge can be found by conducting a program evaluation that strategically assesses the environment of an organization. A program evaluation of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue can be found at the conclusion of this thesis.

Once a program evaluation is complete, it often reveals what many organizations refer to as the “Culture” of the organization. Culture is defined as the learned behavior or environment of an individual, community or organization (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 6). Questions asked in the process of an evaluation, reveal if employees feel empowered, strengthened and trusted to carry out the mission of their organization. Answers to these questions demonstrate the way an employee interacts within his or her organization, which is a crucial piece of knowledge for any employer. Once an organization recognizes its culture, it can design a practical strategy to assess any needs that may require direct attention, embedding empowerment into the structure of their organization.

An organization’s leaders must model and implement empowerment in order for the organization to be successful and sustainable. In *The Leadership Challenge*, authors Kouzes and Posner address the need for leaders to foster collaboration and strengthen other individuals within their team. Organizational leaders who trust their team, and whose actions reflect that trust, create a more successful and dynamic environment. This environment ignites creativity, compassion and a culture of autonomy and acceptance. The authors conclude, “The more trusted people feel, the better they innovate” (Kouzes, Posner 225). When leaders create a culture where individuals feel confident in voicing their opinions, employees are empowered to create change. Thus an organizations success hinges on employee empowerment.

Effective leaders recognize the importance of strong team dynamics. Although leaders tend to be highly motivated and determined individuals, their ability to collaborate and strengthen other individuals is what ultimately makes them successful. Leadership cannot be founded on the notion of individual power. Kouzes and Posner agree that, “Leaders accept and act on the paradox of power; you become more powerful when you give your own power away” (Kouzes & Posner 251). Leaders must intentionally build their team members. Likewise, organizations must provide their employees with opportunities to learn, grow, be challenged and chose the best options for themselves. True leadership within an organization is not being threatened by others success, but instead providing the tools and resources to get them there.

An example of healthy empowerment can be seen in World Relief Seattle office. Their internal structure provides a great framework for implementing empowerment on a daily basis. World Relief is diligent in structuring a one-on-one meeting between managers and their employees on a monthly basis. These meetings serve as a constructive space for feedback, development and relationship growth. I had the opportunity to interview Megan Kennedy the ESL coordinator for World Relief Seattle. According to Kennedy, World Relief diligently structures their organization to value their employees.

When asked about empowerment through autonomy, Kennedy used the example of being trusted to develop a low-literacy class out of a need she saw, but couldn't back by data. World Relief demonstrated good management by trusting employees to know the needs of the organization. Kennedy was able to petition for this class because she holds a strong relationship, and mutual trust with her management. Her trust was not built overnight; it took time, structure and commitment. Kennedy credits her management for demonstrating clearly what empowerment can look like in a work place. She explains, “Our managers see their role as

“serving the people who traditionally would be seen as under them” (Kennedy). When organizations empower their employees by seeing them this way, they gain a greater ability to meet external needs. In this instance, World Relief developed a low-literacy class for newly settled refugees, which has already seen several successful graduates. This opportunity has given Kennedy the confidence to explore more areas throughout World Relief where she can make a greater impact.

Although organizations may see the benefits associated with empowerment, they often see the concept of empowerment as risky. Empowerment requires organizations to redistribute power from a few leaders and delegate it to many employees, which counters the way power is traditionally distributed in corporations. Organizations that effectively empower employees no longer function in the top down business methodology. The result of this interpretation creates a high level of power distance (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov 188). Power Distance is evident when high ranking CEO's and supervisors make large decisions with little to no input from other employees; consequently creating fear, insecurities and low creative performance in their teams. A key benefit for organizations shifting towards the empowerment structure is they eliminate dependency on key leaders, creating a layer of natural leadership that is often missing in corporate structures. This delegation of power provides opportunities for a greater level of creativity and success amongst all organizations employees. However, it also holds opportunities for failure. Failure in organizations is approached as a vulnerability because it can result in a loss of assets, time and partnerships.

Vulnerability:

Vulnerability is often perceived as negative. However, it is important to understand that vulnerability is not always negative, and is a raw emotion that embodies risk. Author Brene

Brown is well-known for her dynamic understanding of vulnerability and emotion, urging people to accept themselves and push for the acceptance and love of others. Brown uses her social scientific background to examine the stories of individuals in their moments of bravery and vulnerability. In a well-known TED Talk titled *The Power of Vulnerability*, Brown concludes that individuals who hold a common understanding of deep emotion and a willingness to dig deeper into being uncomfortable, flourish in all aspects of their lives (Brown). This vulnerability, this willingness, is what Brown declares creates a wholehearted person.

This same scientific research can be applied to organizations. Vulnerability is powerful in the world of non-profits, because non-profit organizations understand that people are the heart of their business. Yet people are emotional and unpredictable creatures. Humans are a vast mystery with the unlimited capacity for both good and evil (Groody 11). People, coincidentally have become the foundation for the values and missions of many non-profit organizations. Embracing emotion and discomfort is not a task many businesses are willing to endure. Yet organizations have to ask themselves if the discomfort resulting from vulnerability, is worth embracing.

Vulnerability can transform what were once transactional interactions within an organization and create transformational moments. When an organization engages its employees on an authentic and meaningful level, it creates opportunity for vulnerable relationships. Employees build autonomy because they feel well cared for and understood. When people in an organization are transformed, the culture of the organization is transformed. When employees are no longer afraid of the repercussions of failing, they risk more. These risks can be catalysts for growth and success within the organization (Hall 191). Vulnerability is more than an emotion; it is an authentic and intentional way of engaging with employees that empowers them to risk an investment in your organization. Relationships sound simple, yet the mere act of knowing your

employees on a personal level has the power to transform an organization.

Empowering employees takes risk; it takes willingness to build transformational relationships that require vulnerability. Leaders must understand the benefits of empowerment. Ryan Scott, the Vice-President and COO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue, illustrates the importance of valuing and empowering every individual of their team. Scott explains, “We have a hard time maintaining staff. A lot of our employees find opportunities elsewhere, creating a revolving door effect for us. Our biggest struggle is trying to figure out how to empower our part-time staff so that they will want to grow with our organization” (Scott). Scott is not alone in this struggle; without empowerment employees find opportunities elsewhere, leaving organizations like the Boys and Girls Club in a constant rebuilding phase lacking the ability to effectively reach their goals. Leaving youth in the community without mentor opportunities and consistency, which may not be present at home.

Empowerment is an understanding that trust, vulnerability and support are three key factors needed in creating a successful team environment. When employees know they are trusted, they take risks that result in the creativity needed for organizations to thrive. Employee empowerment is essential in building employee relations that create autonomy and growth within the organization. Non-profits must strengthen the relationship leaders have with employees, trusting them with the external mission of the organization in a way that is practical and well received. It takes the dedication and loyalty of many talented individuals for an organization to be successful. Employee empowerment is the means by which non-profits can transform the internal structure of their organization, and thereby its external results.

IV. Internal Investment:

Just as leaders are taught to practice self-care, non-profit organizations must also create and nurture the internal health of the corporation. This perspective is known as internal investment. Internal investment is the methodology by which investment in the character, wellness and skill set of an organization's employees produces a greater profit and success rate than relying solely on external investments (Jordan-Evans, Kaye).

When employers value loyalty, honesty and courage equally as a practical skill set, they create a foundation for creative security within the organization. Creative security is present in a culture in which employees know that their creativity and a willingness to be vulnerable, though subject to failure, is not only supported by the organization, but valued as well. This freedom to fail is often approached as a risky financial obligation. However, a failure to cultivate this environment in an organization is an even greater risk. As author Simon Sinek explains,

Great companies don't hire skilled people and motivate them, they hire already motivated people and inspire them. People are either motivated or they are not.

Unless you give motivated people something to believe in, something bigger than their job to work toward, they will motivate themselves to find a new job and you'll be stuck with whoever's left (Sinek 25).

Talent is not enough:

It is not enough for employees to merely possess a specific skill set; they must also be well rounded; possess high character as an individual, and be willing to invest in those that surround them. In *The Good Ones: The Crucial Qualities of High Character Employees*, author Bruce Weinstein uses his own experience, as well as the voices of multiple successful managers and employees from around the United States, to address the importance of building quality character in the business world through internal investment. When organizations view their

employees as an investment, it increases the value employers place on their employees.

Employees who possess high character is a necessity for organizations to truly flourish (Weinstein 36). Organizations can shape and build a foundation of character for their employees by providing adequate training, coaching and mentorships.

This foundation is an asset delivered by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue. Through my fieldwork, I was able to examine this organization's core structure regarding staff training and development. As an organization the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue is intentional about holding weekly staff meetings. These meetings provide ample time to develop particular skills and a consistent knowledge base among employees. By investing in employees on regular basis organizations gain the opportunity to build the skills and character they desire in their employees.

Employees are often seen simply as a workforce. However, when viewed as holding internal value and worth, employees gain a deeper sense of connection with their employers. This connection inspires people to invest themselves within an organization. Connection is the birthplace of vulnerability and trust, which has proven to be a key component in any non-profit's success. Organizations advance by investing internally in the lives and successes of their employees. Internal investment creates multi-faceted layers in which employees are trained, equipped, thanked and valued. Like many investments this is not something that gains immense wealth and growth overnight; it is a process that takes dedication and commitment to the vision.

Just as upper management fosters empowerment, internal investment is a decision that must be supported and encouraged by the leading members of an organization. In *Managing to Change the World: A Non-profit Leaders Guide to Getting Results*, authors Alison Green and Jerry Hauser stray from typical staff development approaches to provide clear and concise

management training. They argue that promoting clear goals, accountability and leadership development techniques are key investments organizations should be making in their employees (Green, Hauser 32). When the management of an organization leads well and focuses on how to improve not only their employees, but themselves as well, the entire company thrives. It is not enough to simply treat employees well; organizations must also have an equipped, passionate and skilled management team (Hall 106).

Funding Internal Investment:

However internal investment is much more than a simple strategy, it is the core belief that people particularly an organization's employees, are intrinsically valuable. If people are the heartbeat of an organization, shouldn't they be the key assets in which that organization chooses to invest? Author and activist Dan Pallotta explores this question in his latest book *Uncharitable: How Restraints on Non-profits Undermine Their Potential*. He argues that non-profits are often focused on keeping the overhead of their organization as low as possible to appease and attract funders and grants (Pallotta 17). However, this approach devalues the immense amount of talent, passion and investment located under the umbrella of overhead. This perspective eliminates the human connection within an organization. Forced financial restrictions and low overheads fail to bring justice to the blood, sweat and tears that employees pour into an organization.

Non-profit organizations and funders alike must ask themselves why it has become more attractive to fund programs rather than the individuals who support and sustain those very programs. It is through these individuals that the mission of the organization comes to fruition. However it is critical to understand that one cannot exist without the other. External programming is essential to the success of many non-profits, but it cannot be the sole priority.

Organizations must value their employees with the same audacity in which they engage their programs.

However, non-profit organizations often are not alone in determining their budget for the fiscal year. Donors, board members and even grant stipulations can become major contributors in financial decision-making. Donors, although well intended, often put stipulations on their financial gift. For example, a donor may give a gift of \$10,000, but the entirety of that gift has to go to funding new shoes for all of the children within the program. Although this donor means well, this condition limits the organizations ability to use these finances for areas of greater need within the organization. These stipulations restrict an organizations ability to invest internally within the organization.

Some would argue that these financial stipulations provide a means of accountability for organizations that operate predominantly on the financial generosity of others. Although financial accountability is needed within any organization, there are other means through which to hold non-profits accountable. For example, non-profits release an annual report addressing their financial gains and investments as well as external goals achieved throughout the year. If funders truly believe in the mission of an organization, they should see the value in financially supporting not only its programs, but its employees as well.

Investing in the Potential:

Internal investment forces an organization to look at its employees as just that, an investment. Employees are assets that hold current value, possessing the immense possibility of gaining incredible value and worth. When someone places one's money in the banking system to gain interest, it is understood that this process takes time. Similarly a long-term structure must be

present in order for employees to improve, grow in autonomy and increase the worth of the organization as a whole.

Internal investment structures rely heavily on an organizational leaders being able to perceive potential. These structures allow organizations to believe in an employee's ability to grow and learn. When employees are treated as valuable assets, they are less likely to leave a non-profit and more likely to invest deeper into the relationships and structure of their particular organization (Jordan-Evans, Kaye 19).

High retention rates are crucial for non-profits because these organizations rely heavily on the relationships cultivated with particular individuals. For example, employees in the funding department of any non-profit make a career out of building partnerships with donors and other organizations in order to strengthen financial assets. These employees spend countless hours building relationships and trust. If a particular individual leaves an organization because they are not invested, valued or connected, those donor relationships are at risk of dissolving. Donors often look for consistency; they determine their monetary gift often based off of relationship and reputation. When either of these are damaged, the organization can suffer a dramatic loss in donations. Thus, high retention rates stand in direct relation to donations an organization receives.

Yet, suppose that this funding employee does not leave but instead carries a feeling of under appreciation, resulting in a lack of commitment to the organization. This attitude will have direct implications upon those same donor relationships. A negative attitude on the part of an employee, has the potential to create a negative atmosphere for the entire organization. Invested employees are crucial to the sustainability and success of any non-profit organization.

When organizations recognize the worth in their employees, they will also see their potential for improvement. This is where empowerment and vulnerability must be held as correlating values. Furthermore, non-profit organizations must hold their employees with the same value as those they seek to serve. Organizations cannot simply hold a mission statement about empowering people through love, while not empowering or loving their own employees.

Recognition in the organization:

Leaders who want the best must expect the best. This is not an expectation out of obligation, but an expectation out of a deep belief in a person (Kouzes, Posner 42). By keeping the standards for employment high, leaders help reveal potential and abilities in individuals that they never thought possible. And when people strive for the best, small gestures of appreciation go a long way. People who feel appreciated are more willing to put in the extra effort towards the success of an organization.

Leaders, and organizations need to recognize and celebrate the work of individuals and teams. In order to recognize accomplishment and growth, employers must first establish a sense of community in the culture of the organization. When an organization values community, people within the organization learn to value one another. Employers should know birthdays, anniversaries and major life events. Showing care for employees as more than their work, makes them feel appreciated and important. Leadership is all about relationship (Kouzes, Posner 321). Organizational leaders must be involved, be present and allow themselves to genuinely care about the people that make up the organization they serve.

Opportunities for Investment:

Practically speaking, how can an organization focus on internal investments when non-profits are notorious for tight budgets and strict limits on spending (White 4)? It is crucial to

understand that internal investments do not always rest on financial incentives. Investments can range from peer support groups to advanced trainings to benefit packages and community involvement. A successful way to build investment into the culture of an organization is to survey current employees. Their feedback can be fundamental in building policies and procedures that truly cultivate an atmosphere of investment and worth.

The topic of coaching and mentorship has become one that has engulfed both the for-profit and non-profit industries. The implementation of team dynamics can either make or break the effectiveness of an organization. In *Coaching and Mentoring*, produced by Harvard Business Essentials, we see the differences in these two concepts clearly defined.

The first relationship Harvard Business Essentials defines is that of a coach. From an organizational perspective coaches function to build task-focused skills. For example a soccer coach does not start practice expecting an all-star team, but rather starts with methods and strategies to build the fundamental skills needed. Good coaches are able to see which individual player needs improvement, and in what specific area. This assessment helps the coach strategically position players based on current skill and identified potential. The same can be done in an organization. When leaders place people in the right position, team dynamics become exceptional.

The other relationship the Harvard Business Essentials addresses is that of a mentor. Mentoring, like coaching, is intended to be an investment into a person from a seasoned leader. Yet where coaching focuses on practical tasks, mentoring revolves around the character aspects of a person, although they can intertwine at times. Harvard Business Essential remarks, “Mentoring, then, is the offering of advice, information, or guidance by a person with useful experience, skills, or expertise for another individual’s personal and professional development”

(76). Mentoring relationships are often driven by the one who desires to learn; to be mentored. Both coaching and mentoring are a valuable investment for employees, and provide ample opportunities for employee growth and advancement.

Looking back on our own lives, most of us can be certain that somewhere along the way someone has chosen to invest in us. Whether we sought out this investment or someone else initiated it, its impact on our own success is something we often treasure. Bill Hybels, author of *Courageous Leadership*, speaks about the power of leaders investing in leaders. Hybels supports this by proclaiming, “All of us got to where we are today because someone built into us, coached us and showed us how to lead” (125). Believing in someone is powerful; investing in their future is life changing, both proving beneficial for the organization and the employee growth and development.

Internal investment is an opportunity for organizations to develop and support their biggest asset: people. Non-profits should be the leading examples of how organizations treat their employees. It is essential that the external mission and values of an organization, are reflected in the relationship it has with its employees. It is not enough for nonprofits to declare that they value their employees, this claim must also be backed by clear investments into the internal structure of the organization.

V. Conclusion

It is often said that where we invest our time we also will invest our life. The same can be said about an organization: where it spends its money and time is where it will make the biggest impact. Non-profits must ask themselves if their spending and investments align with the external missions towards which they claim to be working. If the answer is no, a new alignment is in definite order. A non-profit cannot function solely based off a good idea that combats social

justice; it has to be willing to value its employees enough to change toxic cultures that inhibit the growth and success of employees. Non-profit organizations have an obligation to align their internal structures to reflect the values of the organization.

It is essential for non-profits to be intentional in empowering and investing in their employees. When organizations establish health within their internal structure they give employees like Rachel, the young non-profit employee fighting child hunger, the opportunity to thrive at achieving the external mission of their organization. By developing a strong Human Resource department, an organization builds a foundation for the employer to invest internally, empowering current employees to advance towards their external goal.

Non-profits have a unique opportunity to combine sensitivity to the needs of this world with intentional leadership strategies that empower, inspire and grow their employees. It is through this internal intentionality that non-profit organizations will flourish in employee relations, resulting in higher retention rates, greater employee satisfaction and a keen ability to achieve external goals. When employees thrive, organizations thrive, and that is true organizational success.

VI. Program Evaluation

Organizational Background:

Mission of the Organization:

The mission of the Boys and Girls Club of America is, “To inspire and empower all young people, especially those who need us most to reach their full potential as productive, caring responsible citizens.” This vision is the foundation for their Project Learn initiative, which partners with local elementary schools to provide after school care for families. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue was established out of the need to see working families supported in raising healthy, smart and active youth.

Values:

Academic Success
Healthy Lifestyles
Good Character & Leadership

History of the Organization:

The Boys and Girls Club is a national organization that establishes a safe and empowering place for children and youth in communities throughout the United States. The organization had its humble beginnings in 1860 by three women who believed that young street boys should have another alternative. In 1906 the organization became a nation movement and aligned them selves as the Boys Federation of America. The city of Bellevue, Washington founded their first Boys and Girls Clubs in 1952 with one clubhouse, however at the time it was known as the Boys Club of America. In the 1970's Bellevue was one of the first clubs in the organization to offer services and care for girls. This fundamental change sparked the nation to proactively support equal opportunities for all girls. Innovation, adaptability and courage have been values exemplified in the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue.

Currently there are twelve Clubs serving the Bellevue area. These clubs include three complexes that are in partnership with the King County Housing Agency, serving low-income families in need of affordable housing. There are three clubs within public elementary schools, representing a partnership with the Bellevue School District. The organization also has two clubs within community centers, which were built in partnership with the City of Bellevue. There is also one main clubhouse that serves the downtown area, and houses the administration department. Together these clubs are serving 7,500 registered children each year with an additional 4000 teens being served at local teen centers.

Beneficiaries:

The largest beneficiaries of the Boys and girls Clubs of Bellevue, and the services they provide, are the local youth and families served by the club. Other beneficiaries include community members, the Bellevue School District, King County Housing and several organizations that partner with the Boys and Girls Club.

Organizational Programs and Services:

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue provide after school care to youth aged students throughout the local community. They partner with the Bellevue School District to ensure that all students are on tract to a successful graduation. As well as works to develop good character and citizenship, leadership skills and academic success. These qualities are developed through focused and intentional national and local programming such as: Fine Arts, Power Hour, Triple Play Body and daily staff mentorship.

Identify Networks and Collaborative Partners:

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue would not be as successful as it is today without the multiple partnerships and donors throughout the community. Some partners include: Microsoft, Bank of America and Expedia. However by building collaborative relationships with the Bellevue School District and other non-profits such as Jubilee Reach, they are best able to serve all youth in the Bellevue area.

Size of the Organization (As reported in the 2015 Annual Report):

Total Net Revenue and Support- \$4,231,695

Total Expenses- \$3,918,841

Staff Number- Roughly 20 full time staff and 30 part time staff

Organizational Structure:

The Boys and Girls Club as an organization is set up with an administrative team that works to support grants, funding, finance, HR, enrollment and scholarship applications. It then separated into four main departments: Project Learn (Elementary Youth), Athletics, Teen Center and a Preschool. In each department there are both full-time and part-time staff.

This Program Evaluation focuses primarily on the Human Resource Department within the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue. The Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue employs roughly 40 personnel, ranging from full time administrative positions to part-time program staff. The Human Resource Department is responsible for hiring and maintaining organization personnel, as well as managing any and all employee engagement opportunities. For a more comprehensive understanding of Human Resource responsibilities please see the Human Relations portion of this Thesis.

Currently, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue's Human Resource Department is managed by Mona Campbell. Campbell is a part-time employee who oversees both Human Resources and a large portion of the Financial Department. For such a large organization this is a complicated task for one employee, and some responsibilities have been delegated to other full-time employees.

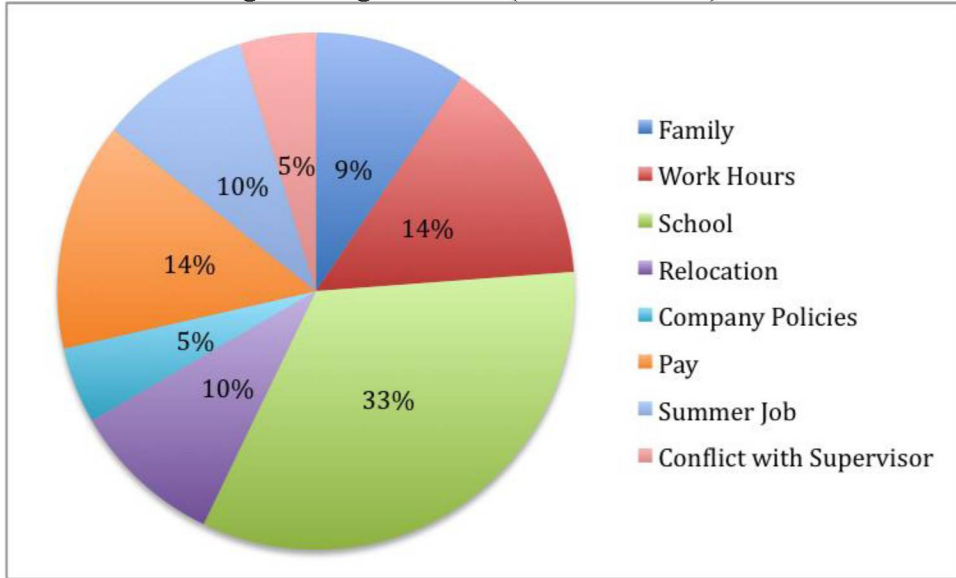
Board of Directors:

The Board of Directors is made up of elite and supportive individuals who are dedicated to the success and impact of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue. A list of Board Members can be found here: <http://www.bgcbellevue.org/a/Our-Team/Board>

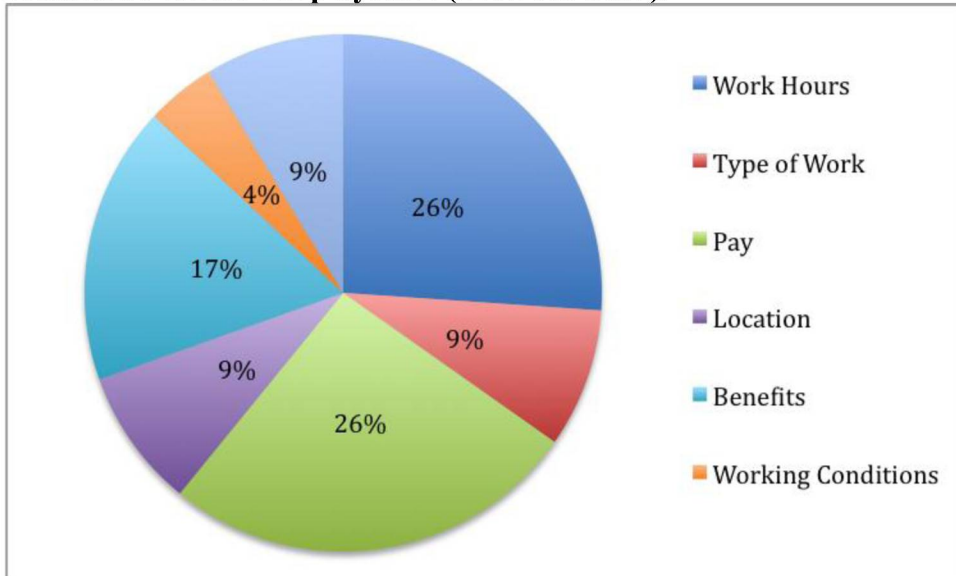
Research:

Through surveys, interviews and observation I was able to collect data to evaluate the current state and culture of the staff employed by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue. The following results reflect both current and past employees. Survey results of area youth collected by the Boys and Girls Clubs of America will also be reflected in this evaluation. When referencing previous staff it is in reference to employees who have left the organization within the last two years.

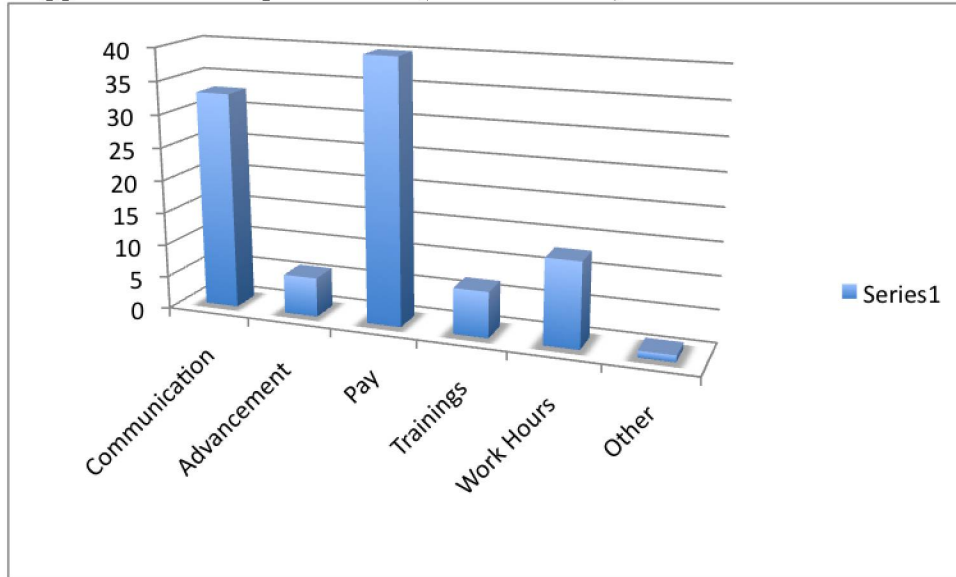
Reason for leaving the Organization (Previous Staff):



Preference in New Employment (Previous Staff):

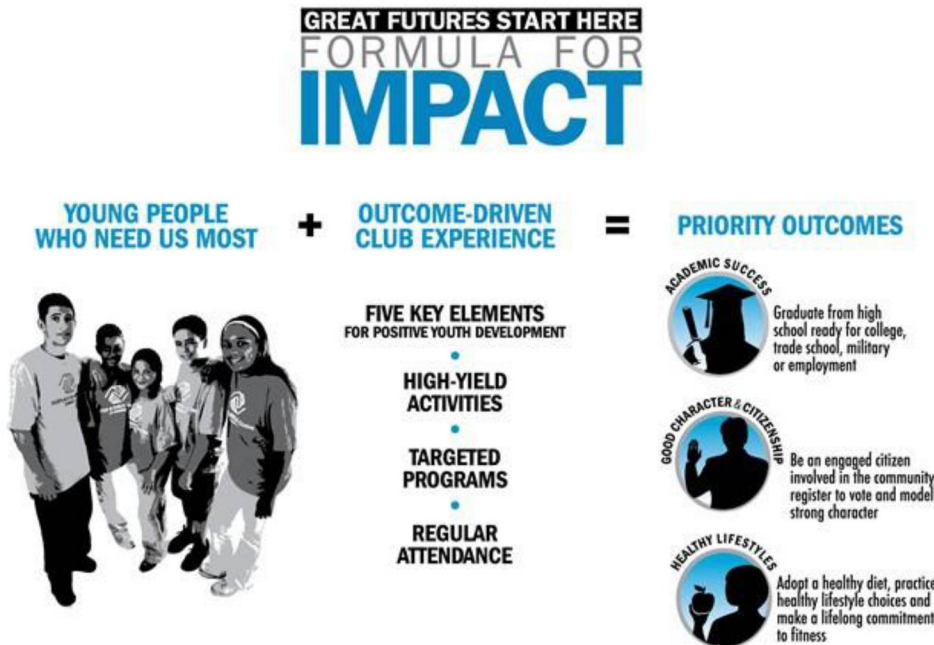


Suggestions for Improvement (Current Staff):



Outcome Map:

The first outcome map was created by the Boys and Girls Club of America and illustrates the overall mission of the organization (see fig. 2).



(Figure 2)

The second outcome map represents the Human Resource department at the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue (see fig. 3) .



(Figure 3)

Narrative:

The Boys and Girls Club of Bellevue (BGCB) is an excellent organization with an outstanding history of support from within the community. They are committed to the future generations and have developed healthy and collaborative relationships supporting Bellevue families. As an organization they are dedicated to inspire and empower all youth, especially those facing overwhelming circumstances, to become engaged citizens in the community.

Due to the large scale and intricate details of the Boys and Girls Club this program evaluation focuses on the Human Resource department of the organization, highlighting resources, fundamental strategies, outcomes, and an overarching goals. The purpose of the outcome map is to represent interconnected strategies that develop critical outcomes for the organization.

In collaboration with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue I concluded that

Human Resources four main strategies are:

- Recruitment and Hiring of Employees
- Providing Employee Compensation
- Implementing Employee Policies
- Maintaining low overhead costs

The key outcomes for these strategies include:

- Hiring adequate employees
- Providing consistent employee policies
- Providing legal wage and compensation
- Maintaining consistent hiring process
- Low Human Resource accessibility for employees
- Overwhelmed employees with Human Resource responsibilities

Although the Boys and Girls Club is a large-scale operation, the Human Resource department is the main focus point for this evaluation. As an organization BGCB struggles to maintain consistent employees, and lacks the fundamental structure to build a healthy human relations strategy. However, this outcome map allows the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue to see the impact this specific department can have on the entirety of the organization.

The audience for this particular outcome map is the management team at the Boys and Girls Club. With this knowledge they can be empowered to elect changes within their organization. However, this visual can also be used to promote private donors and foundation grants supporting employee empowerment and Human Relations. This outcome map provides

the organization with a chance to assess, adjust and advance as the external programs continue to grow.

A critical assumption this outcome map addresses is that the organization would maintain and implement the structures provided by the Human Resource department. It also assumes that employees will choose to follow policies and strategies provided by the organization. An assumption that correlates throughout the entirety of this outcome map is the perception that structure, relationships and consistency correlates to an employees' ability be successful.

Although the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue is well supported, it lacks the ability to empower and develop employees. This gap in development is an opportunity to strengthen an organization that already has influence in a growing community. When we strengthen the organization's employees through intentional Human Relations, we strengthen their ability to effectively engage an entire community. My hope is that this outcome map will inspire organizational leaders in their pursuit of developing a healthy and effective Human Resource department.

Evaluation Plan:

The Evaluation Plan below illustrates three main outcomes that will help generate the success of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue. Although the program evaluation is focused on the Human Resource Department it was crucial for me to include one outcome that assesses the impact employees have on the overarching mission of the organization. Below you will see two short-term goals surrounding the internal structure of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue. The long-term goal assesses how organization employees can affect the academic success of club members.

Outcomes	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Data Collection Frequency	Sampling Strategy
<p>Increased retention rate among part-time staff (6-9 months)</p>	<p>An increase in Staff advancement through promotion and job training.</p> <p>Less financial resources used to train and equip new staff.</p> <p>Increased level of safe and nurturing relationships between staff and club members.</p>	<p>Maintaining records of staff anniversaries and retention.</p> <p>Qualitative data collection; survey of staff indicating their ability to advance, and satisfaction with the organization.</p> <p>Qualitative data collection; club member and staff.</p>	<p>Records are a continuous process but should be reviewed annually.</p> <p>Surveys should be completed yearly with both staff and club members.</p>	<p>Collect data from current staff by having employees fill out survey during their yearly evaluation.</p> <p>Club members will be surveyed annually using a confidential survey given during club hours.</p>
<p>An increased level of internal investment (6-9 months)</p>	<p>An increased amount of financial resources used towards employees.</p> <p>Increase in training opportunities for current staff.</p> <p>Lower turnover rate of employees.</p>	<p>Qualitative data collected from staff with an emphasis on employee investment.</p> <p>Financial comparisons of employee based expenses.</p> <p>Quantitative studies of staff retention per year.</p>	<p>Qualitative data collected on a yearly basis.</p> <p>Quantitative comparisons to be made every three years.</p>	<p>Surveys to be collected from current employees of all departments and status.</p> <p>Financial advisors, department leads, board members and HR should review quantitative data to ensure employee gains.</p>
<p>Higher academic success of club</p>	<p>Increased level of average daily attendance (ADA).</p> <p>Higher rates of academic</p>	<p>Yearly club member survey reviewing staff to club relations.</p> <p>Quantitative</p>	<p>Surveys done on a yearly basis.</p> <p>Quantitative collection of</p>	<p>Club attendees would complete a survey once a year.</p> <p>ADA is kept through Active</p>

members. (1-3 years)	success, including graduation rates. Increase in retention rates of club members.	comparisons of ADA throughout Bellevue clubs Increased graduation rates and grades as reported by Bellevue School District compared with club members.	ADA numbers and retention rates provided in a comparison assessment. Collaborate with Bellevue School District to identify increase in graduation rates of club members vs. non-club members.	Net the attendance tracker. Collect data from each club and create comparison table. Identify graduation rates of club members vs. average graduation rates and grades.
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The evaluation plan completed for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue (BGCB) focuses upon three main outcomes addressed in the above evaluation plan. These outcomes were decided upon as a collaborative effort between myself, and executive council from current Boys and Girls Club Staff. These outcomes include two mid range outcomes (6-9 months) and one long-term outcome (1-3 years). The outcomes are as follows: Increased retention rate of part time employees, increased level of internal investment and a long term goal of higher academic success of club members.

We selected these outcomes for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue because they closely relate to the values, goals and strategies defined by the organization. The mission of the Boys and Girls Club is “To inspire and empower all young people, especially those who need us most to reach their full potential as productive, caring responsible citizens.” The two mid range outcomes focused on employee relations within the organization. When the organization has strong and invested employees their ability to reach and serve local youth is exemplified.

Through research and comprehensive interviews it is clear that BGCB struggles with retaining part-time employees, which in return hurts the effectiveness of their programs. Employees who are empowered and well cared for have an increased investment in the organization. The final long-term outcome is founded out of the idea that invested and loyal employees will increase the organizations ability to transform the youth of the Bellevue community. As a tangible example of this transformation, and one of the organizations core values, academic success will be used as the measurement tool. The more club members participate fully in the organizations programs, the greater access they have to academic support. This support is crucial in helping club members succeed in school. This outcome was chosen to measure the influence that employees hold on the success of the organizations programs.

The indicators for these outcomes are a mix between collection methods BGCB already has in place, and new developed strategies created for outcome success. An indicator already used within the organization is the record of attendance, retention and participation of all club members. The organization records all three of these indicators on a daily basis at all locations, and can be accessed by any director. Indicators for qualitative data would have to be developed to reflect where the organization currently sits regarding both employee engagement and club member satisfaction. By setting a starting point, the organization is able to measure any effect that programs may have on employees or club members.

An indicator that is being developed to measure the correlation between staff retention and club members' academic success is dependent upon collaboration with the Bellevue School District. Although these indicators are harder to measure, we believe they may be the most powerful. By building a comparison tool that shows the direct influence BGCB employees, and programming, have on Bellevue youth it becomes clear that investment in employees is an

investment in the mission of the organization. This comparative study can be used to track growth and influence within the organization, as well as the effectiveness of employee programming. This indicator can also be used to help support donor relations within the organization, growing available funding for internal investment.

These outcomes and indicators work together to display the effectiveness of employee investment, and empowerment within the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue. Overtime these outcomes can develop a stronger sense of the organizations ability to retain staff, and highlight any programs that may need strengthening. It is crucial for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Bellevue to see the potential for investment within their own organization. By investing in employees, this organization has the ability to transform an entire community, and thrive at their external mission.

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