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Organization Development in a Nonprofit Setting

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Organization Development in a Nonprofit Setting

Abstract
Compeer is a nonprofit organization that matches community volunteers in supportive friendship relationships with children and adults receiving mental health treatment (www.compeer.org, 2003). There was concern on behalf of managers and the Board of Directors that the current job designs and organizational structure are constraining volunteer recruitment activities and preventing Compeer from serving the maximum number of referred clients. The researcher, acting as a third-party consultant, completed an organization development intervention. Qualitative research and a literature review enabled the researcher to identify strengths, issues and concerns and to make recommendations for future action based on these findings. Strengths of Compeer identified were human capital, key indicators, programming, and alternative events. Issues and concerns in the organization included a lengthy client waiting list, flawed organizational structure, process inefficiencies, and unsound recruiting strategies. Researcher recommendations included adopting employee empowerment, implementing a team structure, and assigning top executives a leading role in volunteer recruitment. Implications for HRD practitioners and suggestions for future research are also discussed in the paper.

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Final thanks go to Sharon Sellers. Her wisdom and leadership set the example of professional conduct that I hope to uphold. May God bless and keep my friend Sharon always.
DEDICATION

This paper, my degree, and my life are dedicated to my wonderful wife Rosemary. Without her patience and support, my academic and professional achievements would have been impossible. Without her companionship and love, they would be meaningless.
ABSTRACT

Compeer is a nonprofit organization that matches community volunteers in supportive friendship relationships with children and adults receiving mental health treatment (www.compeer.org, 2003). There was concern on behalf of managers and the Board of Directors that the current job designs and organizational structure are constraining volunteer recruitment activities and preventing Compeer from serving the maximum number of referred clients. The researcher, acting as a third-party consultant, completed an organization development intervention. Qualitative research and a literature review enabled the researcher to identify strengths, issues and concerns and to make recommendations for future action based on these findings.

Strengths of Compeer identified were human capital, key indicators, programming, and alternative events. Issues and concerns in the organization included a lengthy client waiting list, flawed organizational structure, process inefficiencies, and unsound recruiting strategies. Researcher recommendations included adopting employee empowerment, implementing a team structure, and assigning top executives a leading role in volunteer recruitment. Implications for HRD practitioners and suggestions for future research are also discussed in the paper.
CHAPTER 1

Overview

Introduction

This chapter provides an introduction to the paper. It begins with an overview then gives a problem statement and purpose of the study, followed by a description of significance and research design overview.

What is Compeer?

Compeer is a nonprofit organization that matches community volunteers in supportive friendship relationships with children and adults receiving mental health treatment (www.compeer.org, 2003). Compeer is a French word that means companion, peer or equal.

Established in Rochester, NY in 1973, Compeer, Inc. has touched in 28 years the lives of tens of thousands of adults and children with mental illness. Today, Compeer is located in 30 states, Canada, and Australia. Intentionally, there are over 100 Compeer programs. The mission of Compeer is to utilize community volunteers in supportive friendship relations to help people diagnosed with mental illness to live happier and more productive lives.

Compeer, Inc. 2001 Annual Report

Currently Compeer in Rochester has seven Coordinators of Volunteers (VC) that report to the Vice President, Ms. Leanne Reed. Each Coordinator of Volunteers is responsible for the recruitment, selection, training and support of Compeer volunteers as well as support for clients. These professionals act as liaisons with referring therapists and manage the relationships between clients, therapists, and volunteers. Compeer Rochester currently supports approximately 360 peer matches while carrying a waiting list of over
300 referred clients. Ms. Bernice Skirboll, the founder of Compeer who currently serves as President and Executive Director, leads the operation. Ms. Reed reports directly to Ms. Skirboll. Other staff include several support professionals and a Research and Education Coordinator.

Compeer is an international operation. This project concentrates specifically on Compeer Rochester. While it is possible that the recommendations of this report will be extended to other Compeer affiliates, that audience is not the target of this work.

Problem Statement

There is concern that the current job designs and organizational structure are constraining volunteer recruitment activities and preventing Compeer from serving the maximum number of referred clients. There is a need to analyze systems and processes, and to review outside literature and best practices, in order to identify opportunities for improvement. Increased organizational effectiveness will allow Compeer to have the greatest possible impact in the community.

Purpose of Study

The Compeer staff and Board of Directors sought an independent third party consultant to review the current design of the organization and identify opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness. For this project, the researcher acted as a third-party consultant to Compeer to produce a report that identifies a number of possible courses of action designed to increase the effectiveness of Compeer's recruitment efforts.
Significance

Recruitment is a key business operation for Compeer. The success of this nonprofit organization depends on making effective matches between volunteers and clients. The length of the waiting list at present, approximately 300 as of January 2003, is evidence that more people can be served by Compeer in Rochester. More effective recruiting will help Compeer meet organizational objectives.

On a more general level, this project contributes to Human Resource Development (HRD) practice by validating the use of a consultative approach and organization development principles for solving business problems. The project may be seen as contributing to HRD research by identifying areas for future study, particularly the application of HRD principles in a nonprofit setting. Further, this project demonstrates the benefits of using an independent consultant to provide information from a point of neutrality that can be used to make effective organizational decisions.

Research Design Overview

Organization development (OD) is a planned process of organizational or cultural change using behavioral science principles (Burke, 1994). This project is an OD intervention.

Research was conducted both independently and at Compeer headquarters. While quantitative indicators were considered, they served primarily as background and supporting information. The more significant findings of this project came from qualitative research conducted with Compeer employees.
Quantitative data was gathered from Compeer representatives as well as from the Compeer Annual Report. Personal interviews and a focus group provided qualitative data. A thorough review of relevant academic literature supports the project framework, findings, and recommendations.

Definition of Relevant Terms

1. **Coordinator of Volunteers (VC)** is a job title at Compeer. The primary responsibilities of the position include volunteer recruitment, screening, and selection as well as the creation and maintenance of volunteer-client matches. Seven professionals currently serve in this role.

2. **Inquiries** are the initial contacts made with Compeer by prospective volunteers.

3. **Activations** occur when a prospective volunteer is paired with a Compeer client and the relationship commences.

4. **Matches** are the current pairings of volunteers and clients.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced Compeer and the project. A problem statement, purpose of study, statement of significance, research design overview, and definition of relevant terms were included. The next chapter contains a review of relevant academic and popular literature that was used to guide the researcher through this process.
CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter summarizes academic and popular literature relevant to the project. It covers Nonprofit Management, Human Resource Development Principles, and the Consultative Process.

Nonprofit Management

Leadership of nonprofit agencies

Leaders of high performing nonprofit agencies have created ways to support, challenge, equip, and develop their staffs while refining and meeting the organizational mission (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1999). They design organizations and develop programs that can create the highest possible social impact.

Its actions and attitudes indicate that society considers nonprofit and human service organizations and those who work for them to be motivated not just by different goals, but higher goals (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991). Drucker (1990) shares this view, stating that in nonprofit agencies there are only leaders. Individuals that dedicate their careers to public service are valuable organizational assets because they are committed to the people that they serve. They take pride and satisfaction in doing their jobs well. An effective nonprofit executive makes it easy for these people to do their work, easy to have results, easy to enjoy their work.
Drucker (1990) asserts that what ultimately decides the success of a nonprofit agency is the ability to attract and hold committed people. Buckingham and Coffman (1999) contend that people will stay with an organization if they can affirmatively answer two critical questions:

1. Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best everyday?
2. At work, do my opinions seem to count?

Empowering employees increases retention, which in turn increases the probability of success. Empowerment challenges employees, but challenge is important to people who seek opportunities to advance ideas and be part of a greater good (Smith, Bucklin, & Associates, 2000).

Nonprofits have traditionally been poorly managed, but that trend is changing (Letts et al., 1999). Management commitment to service, teamwork, and employee empowerment can give nonprofits important advantages in building quality organizations that produce better outcomes (Letts et al., 1999). Nonprofit agencies underplay the strategy of doing better what they already do well (Drucker, 1990). A simple but valuable prescription is to put the success of the organization in the hands of the people who are committed to achieving positive results.

A challenge to nonprofit organizations is to maximize the value of what they do with the resources they use (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1999). According to Smith et al. (2000), efficiency and cost-effectiveness are the goals of the nonprofit office system and can translate into significant savings. Letts et al., refine this concept by imploring managers
to focus on effectiveness, not just efficiency. Nonprofits are becoming much more results-oriented. Employees in this sector have historically placed higher value on service than on analysis and measurement needed to assess and improve organizational performance (Letts et al.). Clear information is needed about the results of the work for effectiveness to be quantified (Drucker, 1990).

Effectiveness of a for-profit entity is measured in terms of revenue. By contrast, nonprofits evaluate organizational performance in terms of social impact (Drucker, 1990). Letts et al. (1999) elaborate on this point:

The nonprofit sector is facing its own crisis of legitimacy and effectiveness. It can respond by wrapping itself in the nonprofit flag – preaching the social virtues of volunteers, compassion, and service – or it can begin to search for additional leverage in solving social problems. (p. 199)

While nonprofits are seeking different results than their private sector counterparts, their objectives are no less important.

Nonprofits create social impact for clients and volunteers. Letts et al. (1999) listed three key benefits for volunteers: 1) venue for self-expression – people act on values and beliefs; 2) arena for advocacy – people highlight weaknesses in society and promote solutions; and 3) home to citizen organizations – people band together to work for the common good and in so doing create a powerful positive change in collective attitude. Increased effectiveness feeds a self-perpetuating cycle in which volunteers serve clients, creating a social impact that attracts more volunteers that can serve more clients.
Working with volunteers

The assistance of volunteers is critical to the success of nonprofit organizations (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991). Kotler & Andreasen quoted Drucker on volunteerism:

We hear a great deal about the decay and dissolution of family and community and about the loss of values. And, of course, there is reason for concern. But the nonprofits are generating a powerful countercurrent. They are forging new bonds of community, a new commitment to active citizenship, to social responsibility, to values. And surely what the nonprofit contributes to the volunteer is as important as what the volunteer contributes to the nonprofit. Indeed, it may be fully as important as the service, whether religious, educational, or welfare related, that the nonprofit provides in the community. (p. 319)

Maintenance of the mutually beneficial relationship between an agency and its volunteers is a top priority in the nonprofit sector. This requires clear strategies for recruitment, management, and retention of volunteers.

Several trends are putting pressure on nonprofits to improve their ability to recruit volunteers and manage them effectively. They include:

1. People’s motivations for volunteering are changing. They may be seeking self-enlargement, supporting a specific cause, or hoping to make a positive impact on society.

2. There is increased diversity among people who are volunteering. This includes a trend where the served become servers – former clients become volunteers.
3. Volunteers demand more from their experience. They seek input into agency decisions.

(Kotler & Andreasen, 1991)

An understanding of these developments is vital when devising a plan for attracting volunteers. It helps nonprofit agencies understand their audience and the context in which voluntarism is considered.

The most important person to research when formulating recruitment strategies is the individual who should be a volunteer but is not (Drucker, 1990). Gathering demographic data as well as information on religious affiliation, club memberships, and other hobbies will help to develop a profile of current volunteers. This profile can be used to define target markets. The most important knowledge is the potential customer; knowing the customer enables managers to know what results to expect and to abandon tactics that no longer work (Drucker).

Kotler and Andreasen (1991) developed a six-step model for volunteer management (Figure 1). Managing volunteers is similar in many ways to managing permanent employees. Both groups require clearly stated work objectives, and accountability for their accomplishment (Drucker, 1990). Supervisors have a responsibility to intervene when volunteer performance is substandard. The fact that a volunteer is not paid for his or her output does not relieve the person of responsibility to advance the organizational mission.
Figure 1

Managing Volunteers

1. Assess skills and match them with necessary tasks
2. Clearly state job objectives
3. Set specific performance goals and objectives
4. Inform volunteers of goals and of the fact that they are expected to achieve them
5. Inform volunteers that unsatisfactory performance will result in discharge
6. Follow through on standards and accountability


As mentioned earlier, a critical success factor of a nonprofit agency is its ability not only to attract, but also to hold, good people (Drucker, 1990). Subsequently, volunteer retention requires as much organizational attention as recruitment and management.

Strategies to improve volunteer retention include measuring the satisfaction of current volunteers and surveying terminations to ascertain reasons for departure (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991). Kotler and Andreasen developed a list of sources of dissatisfaction:

1. Unreal expectations when volunteering – can be about the nature of the work or time required
2. Lack of appreciative feedback from clients and co-workers
3. Lack of appropriate training and supervision
4. Feeling of second-class citizenship vis-à-vis permanent staff
5. Excessive demands on time
6. Lack sense of personal accomplishment

It is important for the agency to provide realistic information to prospective volunteers. Public relations initiatives, discussed in the next section, are good tools for spreading a positive, realistic message. Noe (2002) supports the third point by asserting that training volunteers effectively will positively impact retention.

The core concepts of voluntarism are spontaneity, privacy, free choice, and promotion of the common good (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991). Many people are intrinsically motivated to volunteer; it is a key responsibility of nonprofit agencies to identify, recruit, effectively manage, and retain appropriate candidates.

Public relations in nonprofit agencies

In the nonprofit sector, public relations (PR) is the practice of communicating with individuals and groups to influence the success of the organization and its cause (Smith et al., 2000). Nonprofit organizations depend on PR to enhance external image, increase participation, energize employees, and support fundraising (Smith et al.).

A model for active public relations planning is shown in Figure 2. The model depicts a loop of activities to convey the fact that public relations efforts are dynamic and ongoing. In fact, sporadic deployment of PR efforts diminishes the likelihood of success. Nonprofit managers need to set strategic goals for the public relations effort and approach them as they would any other performance objective. PR strategies include fundraising,
increasing community awareness, member recruitment and retention, lobbying and issue advocacy, crisis management, and promoting special events (Smith et al., 2000).

Figure 2

Active Public Relations Planning Process Model

- Identify relevant publics
- Measure images and attitudes
- Establish image and attitude goals
- Develop cost-effective strategies
- Prepare for public relations crises
- Choose specific public relations tools
- Implement actions and evaluate results


The Kotler and Andreasen (1991) model includes the selection of specific public relations tools. Some of the vehicles at the disposal of the nonprofit manager are:

- News releases
- Media alerts
- Background materials
- Consumer information
- Annual reports
- Speeches

The ultimate goal of a public relations effort is to anticipate changes so that the agency can have programs in place in anticipation of future trends and opportunities (Smith et al., 2000). It assumes a long-range planning perspective that is decidedly proactive.
External consultants

External consultants can be a valuable resource to nonprofit organizations. They provide agencies access to expertise without adding to permanent personnel costs (Smith et al., 2000). Smith et al. established guidelines for nonprofit managers to follow when deciding on a consultant:

- Perform a cost-benefit analysis
- Cast a wide net
- Informal discussion with candidates
- Develop a request for proposal (RFP)
- Interview finalists
- Contract expectations and responsibilities
- Clarify costs

When a consultant is hired, nonprofit managers are advised to maintain communications while avoiding lengthy meetings, know the project status at all times, be honest and forthcoming, and terminate the project sooner rather than later, if necessary (Smith et al., 2000). The consultative process is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Human Resource Development Principles

Strategic planning

Strategic planning has traditionally been a discipline based on forecasting and positioning, but managers must now account for external environmental factors
(Hammer, 1996). The Rothwell and Kazanas framework (Figure 3) for strategic planning relies heavily on evaluation of a business' relationship with its environment. Smith et al. (2000) concur, noting that the process of strategic planning is not a single, one-time event – it is an ongoing, continuous process that adapts to environmental changes.

**Figure 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Business Planning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Clarify organizational purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Select goals and objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identify present strengths and weaknesses</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Analyze future strengths and opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Compare strengths and weaknesses to opportunities and threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Decide on a long term strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Implement strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evaluate strategy</td>
</tr>
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The Rothwell and Kazanas framework emphasizes the primary need for clarity of purpose. A company cannot fulfill a mission it does not have. Goals and objectives are born of the organizational purpose.
Strategic planning is not a wish list; it is based on realistic, attainable objectives (Smith et al., 2000). Setting reasonable objectives can only happen if an organization views itself through an honest lens. Acknowledgement of strengths and weaknesses is critical if managers are to understand the capacity for implementing of strategic objectives.

Scanning the environment for opportunities and threats is the next step in the Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) framework. Once identified, it is up to the organization to leverage strengths to capitalize on opportunities and fend off threats. Understanding weaknesses allows managers to recognize how the company is vulnerable to threats and the opportunities upon which it cannot capitalize. Ideally, managers focus on constraints until they become strengths and in so doing fortify the entire organization (Goldratt, 1992).

Decisions on long-term strategies, implementation, and evaluation are the final steps in the strategic planning process (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994). Managers are process owners, responsible not for the completion of tasks but for the realization of end-to-end processes (Hammer, 1996). For this reason, planning does not end once a decision to act has been reached. Instead, it pervades all phases of business, with managers assessing incremental results and making tactical adjustments as needed.

When an organization succeeds in planning it is planning to succeed; planning well means doing well (Silver & Mindszenthy, 2001).
Learning and change

The success of an organization depends on its ability to change to fit different situations (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The best time for change is when the company is successful (Drucker, 1990). Drucker expressed an appropriate view of change by writing, "If at first you don’t succeed, try once more – then do something else" (p. 71). By adopting a proactive rather than reactive approach to change, organizations stay dynamic and can exert a higher degree of control over their own activities.


1. Learning – decision to create new ways of working
2. Redesign – invents new ways of working
3. Transition – installs new ways of working

Goldratt (1992) advanced the notion that in order to change, managers must know what to change, what to change to, and how to cause the change. The common thread is that effective change is intentional and planned.

Learning is the first step in organizational change (Hammer, 1996). Most organizations learn poorly, despite the presence of bright, committed people (Senge, 1990).

The starting point of the change effort is full disclosure; being careful about what is communicated stems from the wish to protect and the wish to control (Block, 1996). "In a learning organization, leaders are designers, stewards, and teachers. They are responsible for building organizations...that is, they are responsible for learning" (Senge,
1990, p. 340). People do not resist change; they resist being coerced into changing (Silver & Mindszenty, 2001). By fostering communication and trust, managers learn along with their teams. When this happens, every member of the organization becomes a stakeholder in the change process and is more committed to achieving desired results.

Leadership, structure, and empowerment

Drucker (1990) laid the groundwork for nonprofit management when he stated that mission precedes leadership. Implicit in this notion is the suitability of transformational leadership for human service organizations. The key directive of transformational leadership compels managers to adapt their styles to fit the situation (Sashkin & Rosenbach, 2003).

Block (1996) challenges managers to reconsider the way they run organizations and organize work. Bolman and Deal (1991) suggest that four questions be answered when choosing an organizational structure:

1. What is the nature of the task?
2. What is the nature of the environment?
3. How can we clarify roles and relationships and coordinate efforts?
4. What are acceptable standards for completing tasks and how should rewards be allocated?

The first two support the contentions of Drucker (1990), Sashkin, and Rosenbach (2003). The third leads to a discussion of human resource deployment.
The best way to advance an organization is to develop the people working in it, and the best way to develop people is by building on their strengths (Drucker, 1990; Schein, 1988). According to Buckingham and Coffman (1999), people do not change that much, so time wasted trying to put in what was left out is better spent drawing out what was left in. A transformational leader appeals to followers because he or she makes it a point to capitalize on employee strengths when addressing business problems (Sashkin & Rosenbach, 2003). The essential task of the leader, then, is to arrange work conditions so that people can direct their efforts toward organizational objectives (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

Employee empowerment is a natural extension of transformational leadership (Sashkin & Rosenbach, 2003). It is the act of delegating authority to others to decide and act within negotiated boundaries (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). “Effective leaders empower, increase participation, share information, and move decision-making as far down the organization as possible” (Bolman & Deal, 1991, p. 433). Empowered employees are motivated by the trust and respect shown by managers (Sashkin & Rosenbach, 2003; Silver & Mindszenty, 2001).

Three critical elements of empowerment are: 1) sharing information so that people understand personal and organizational performance levels; 2) imposing a structure within which employees can pursue organizational objectives; and 3) developing teams to replace the traditional hierarchical structure (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). When a team structure is implemented, the team is evaluated as a unit, and performance objectives are
expressed at the group level. In an empowered organization, this is the answer to the fourth question posed by Bolman and Deal.

Hammer (1996) conceived a “business diamond” (Figure 4) that depicts four features of organizations that can be examined to assess the work environment: 1) business processes; 2) jobs and structure; 3) management and measurement systems; and 4) values and beliefs. The Bolman and Deal framework includes questions that target these areas.
Figure 4

The Business Diamond

![Business Diamond Diagram]


Consultative Process

Consulting overview

Consulting can target the structure of an organization or the processes at work within that structure. Schein (1988) contends that the structural approach is limited because incorrect diagnosis of problems can be disastrous and because consultant recommendations are often impossible to implement due to prohibitive cultural factors. Changes to business structures cause employee stress and are disruptive. Process changes do not represent as large a fundamental shift. Schein (1988) also argues that people occupy positions, so evaluating structures separately is a futile endeavor.

Process consultation is a way of studying organizations that starts with the assumption that the organization knows how to solve its own problems but cannot always effectively
frame problems in order to formulate and implement solutions (Schein, 1988). The role of the consultant is to examine the way people work, identify the root causes of inefficiencies, and suggests ways to improve.

The basic assumption of process consultation is that all organizational problems involve human interaction and processes (Schein, 1988). Schein cites the group dynamics research of Lewin as well as Mayo, Roethlisberger, and Dickson, among others, to support this notion. He asserts that how people relate to one another has limited similarity to formal structures, further supporting the use of process consultation.

According to Block (2000), the four elements of the consultant-client relationship are:

1. Responsibility – the goal is a 50/50 split
2. Feelings – the extent to which clients are willing to own their own feelings
3. Trust – important because consultants are often mistrusted
4. Needs of consultant – consultant is entitled to benefit from the relationship

The goals of a consultant are to establish a collaborative client-consultant relationship, solve problems so that they stay solved, and ensure attention is given to both technical and interpersonal issues (Block, 2000). Block appears more willing to confront structural issues than Schein but his work is aimed primarily at business and interpersonal processes.
Consultant roles

Consultants assume a variety of roles. They can be internal, permanent employees of the organization, or external, independent third-party individuals. Internal employees often assume the role of consultant when formulating solutions to business problems (Block, 2000). External consultants may be self-employed, with a consulting firm, or associated with a college or university (Burke, 1994). Functions vary, as do the levels of expertise required of the consultant.

There are different viewpoints expressed in the literature regarding consultant membership in an organization. Block (2000) asserted that an internal consultant is at times more effective than an external consultant. Reasons given include knowledge of business practices and credibility with decision makers. Margulies (1978) contends, however, that an organization development consultant should never be a consultant to his or her own group. Individuals in this situation might lack objectivity and may not be able to consider creatively a full range of solutions because of deeply rooted preconceptions of the organization. Burke (1994) describes a membership boundary on which effective consultants exist. “The OD consultant is never quite in nor quite out” (Burke, p. 176). By maintaining marginality, the consultant has interest and knowledge of the organization but still maintains the objective viewpoint of a neutral observer (Margulies).

Schein (1988) described three models of consultation. In the purchase model, the organization buys expertise that it does not possess from an external source. The doctor-patient model consists of the organization enumerating presenting problems, or
symptoms, to a consultant. The consultant assumes the role of doctor, attempts to diagnose the root causes of the symptoms and recommends corrective action. Process consultation occurs when the consultant helps the organization to diagnose its strengths and weaknesses, see organizational problems, and generate remedies (Burke, 1994).

Block (2000) wrote that consultants choose one of three roles. An expert role means that the client is relying exclusively on the knowledge of the consultant when approaching a problem. Conversely, a consultant can choose a pair-of-hands role to execute a decision made by the client. The third role is collaborative, wherein the client and consultant share equally the responsibility for identifying, diagnosing, and correcting issues. Block used the work of Schein as the basis for his theories. As a result, there are remarkable similarities between the purchase and expert model, and between process consultation and the collaborative approach.

Lippitt and Lippitt (1975) plotted consultant roles on a continuum ranging from directive to non-directive (Figure 5). A directive approach puts the consultant in a leadership role in implementing change while a non-directive approach has the consultant providing only data for client use (Burke, 1994). The model suggests that consultant behavior differs in the amount of leadership it reflects.
Figure 5

Consultant Roles

DIRECTIVE

Advocate
Technical specialist
Trainer/educator
Collaborator
Alternative identifier
Fact finder
Process specialist
Reflector

NON-DIRECTIVE


Use of the expert, directive, and purchase models is fairly common. Organizations often seek consultants because they lack the internal capabilities and time to deal with business problems. By definition a consultant is one who provides help, counsel, and support, implying that such a person is wiser than most (Burke, 1994). There are two major problems associated with this type of approach. The first is that consultants can easily misunderstand the actual causes of presenting problems and apply their knowledge inappropriately; the second is that clients are not as inclined to have a sense of ownership of a solution derived without their input (Block, 2000). People are more committed to that which they help create (Silver & Mindszenty, 2001).
Non-directive roles and the pair-of-hands approach are similar in that they involve the consultant executing decisions of the client organization. The current trend of outsourcing business functions to defray personnel costs is making this an attractive arrangement for many companies. Consultants are forced to rely on the judgment of clients when seeking solutions to problems; this is the primary drawback of these relationships (Block, 2000). This is also true of the doctor-patient model. Further, the consultant becomes a convenient scapegoat if the assumptions of managers are proven inaccurate and strategies fail (Block).

Process consultation, collaborative role, and the collaborator and alternative identifier roles approach problem solving as a joint undertaking between consultant and client. They leverage the expertise of the consultant and the business knowledge of the client to formulate solutions. Dissension can occur, however, if the consultant attempts to assume one of these roles when the client is seeking a different level of directive behavior. If more directive behavior is expected, a consultant attempting to collaborate may be seen as lacking assertiveness or as indecisive (Block, 2000). If less directive behavior, or a pair-of-hands approach, is sought, application of a collaborative model is likely to be perceived as insubordination (Block).

*The consultative process*

Insight into the mechanics of consulting can be found by examining the work of Block (2000) and Schein (1988) (Figure 6). The models are very similar.
Figure 6

Phases of consulting process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block Consulting Model</th>
<th>Schein Process Consultation Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Entry and contracting</td>
<td>1. Initial contact with client organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discovery and dialogue</td>
<td>2. Defining relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Feedback and decision to act</td>
<td>3. Selecting and setting methods of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Engagement and implementation</td>
<td>4. Diagnostic interventions and data gathering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Extension, recycle, or termination</td>
<td>5. Confrontive interventions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Reducing involvement and termination</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The first and second phase of the Schein model and the first phase of the Block model contain many of the same activities. These portions of the consulting models cover the initial client contact when mutual expectations for the project are determined (Block, 2000). The final success of any consulting project relies upon the effectiveness of these steps, for it is here that the actual definitions of success and failure are established and agreed upon by the consultant and client (Block).

Selecting and setting methods of work involve determining methodology and scheduling (Schein, 1988). This phase parallels the Discovery aspect of Block’s second phase.
Dialogue covers data collection in the Block model, while it is a part of the fourth phase of the Schein model. Inherent to the term diagnostic interventions is the fact that data collection mechanisms such as qualitative interviews, surveys, and focus groups are themselves interventions. Observing employees or questioning them about processes begets analysis of work at a level uncommon in the everyday routine.

Block (2000) advocates for a collaborative approach to problem solving by differentiating feedback and decision to act from engagement and implementation. Clients and consultants plan and execute performance improvement interventions together based on data collected in earlier activities. Schein (1988) refers to these as confrontive interventions. They cover a range of agenda-managing tactics including coaching and counseling (Schein).

Both authors make the end of the consultant-client relationship its own phase. The ultimate goal of the consulting process is enabling organizations to solve problems on their own (Schein, 1988). When successful, a consultant eliminates his or her own usefulness. The relationship can continue if additional needs are present.

*Successful consulting*

Block (2000) described three skill sets of the successful consultant. Technical skills are based on the specialized expertise a consultant has to offer. Consultants are useful to clients because of the knowledge they can impart. Interpersonal skills are necessary for positive interaction with members of the client organization. Proficiencies include
listening, supporting, constructive dialogue, and relationship building. Consulting skills are required to execute the five phases shown in Figure 6 (Block).

Burke (1994) identified ten abilities of organization development consultants (Figure 7). They can be characterized as competencies necessary to perform consulting tasks (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994).

**Figure 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten abilities of OD consultants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tolerate ambiguity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Confront difficult issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Support and nurture others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Listen well and empathize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Recognize one’s own feelings and intuitions quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Conceptualize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Discover and mobilize human energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Teach and create learning opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Maintain a sense of humor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although Block categorizes consulting skills more broadly than Burke, the authors agree that certain skills are necessary for effective consulting.

Block (2000) defines authentic behavior and flawless consulting. Authentic behavior requires a consultant to verbalize what he or she is experiencing to the client throughout the consulting process. Open communication is a powerful way to gain leverage and client commitment. Authentic behavior and completing the five phases outlined earlier lead to flawless consulting (Block).

According to Block (2000) flawless consulting allows the consultant to:

1. Have expertise better utilized
2. Have recommendations more frequently implemented
3. Have a partnership relationship with clients
4. Avoid no-win consulting projects
5. Develop client internal commitment
6. Receive support from clients
7. Increase leverage on clients
8. Establish more trusting client relationships

In so doing, projects are likely to result in the mutual benefit of consultant and client.

Schein (1988) wrote that process consulting helps an organization solve its own problems by making it aware of processes, their consequences, and the mechanisms by which they
can be changed. Success of a consulting project, then, is gauged by how well the organization is equipped to do so.

Conclusion

This chapter explored topics in academic and popular literature that were used to assess the current Compeer organization. Nonprofit management, human resource development principles, and the consultative process were examined. The next chapter details the methodology employed by the researcher in executing the project.
CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter details the process used in gathering appropriate data for use in identifying strengths, issues, and concerns of Compeer Rochester. Framework, benchmarking, qualitative research, quantitative research, and the review of relevant literature are all discussed.

Framework

The researcher acted as an independent organization development consultant to execute the project. Emphasis was placed on process consultation, designed to impart skills and values, rather than expert consultation aimed at knowledge transfer (Schein. 1988). Block’s (2000) model served to guide the process. Block identifies five phases in the consulting process: 1) entry and contracting; 2) discovery and dialogue; 3) feedback and decision to act; 4) engagement and implementation; and 5) extension, recycle, or termination.

The entry and contracting phase covers the initial client contact when mutual expectations for the project are determined (Block, 2000). In this instance, the researcher met with two members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, and the Vice President of Compeer in three total sessions. A proposal (shown in Appendix A) was drafted, modified, and approved by all parties.
Discovery and dialogue refer to determining methodology, data collection, and scheduling (Block, 2000). These elements are described later in this chapter.

Feedback and decision to act are the processes of reporting findings, identifying action items, goal setting, and strategy formulation (Block, 2000). This report, supplemented by a presentation to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, and the Vice President, serves as the primary feedback mechanism. Compeer management will determine strategies and objectives for acting on the recommendations.

Engagement and implementation will fall to the organization (Block, 2000). Compeer will determine appropriate courses of future action.

Extension, recycle, and termination are the options available when considering the continued service of the consultant (Block, 2000). As this project is academic in nature, the researcher will not continue as a student-consultant once the contracted commitments are met.

**Benchmarking**

Benchmarking, defined as selecting a high performing organization and attempting to mimic its business practices, was considered but not executed (Fisher, Schoenfeldt, & Shaw, 1996). The logic behind this decision was that success in another context does not automatically assure success in this particular organization (Block & Markowitz, 2001). Compeer is a unique organization with a unique set of business processes. Benchmarking
can also lead an organization to underestimate the risk and labor involved in change implementation, as success of another can give a false sense of security (Block & Markowitz).

*Qualitative Research*

Qualitative research was completed over two days at the Compeer office in Monroe Square in Rochester, New York. 10 one-hour personal interviews and a 90-minute focus group were conducted.

Six Coordinators of Volunteers (VC) were interviewed. Each VC was asked the same series of questions (Figure 8). It should be noted that while these interviews were intended to be diagnostic, observing and questioning are themselves a form of intervention (Schein, 1988). Put differently, members of an organization consider and contemplate organizational issues with greater energy when confronted by inquiry on the topics.
Figure 8

**Coordinator of Volunteers Interview Questions**

How many matches do you currently manage?

How much time, on average, do you spend with each match monthly?

What portion of your time is spent recruiting?

Tell me about your recruiting activities.

What recruitment activities have been successful?

What recruitment activities have been ineffective?

What opportunities do you see for improvement (processes, case management, recruiting)?

If you had no responsibilities other than recruitment, what initiatives would you institute?

If you could ask any question of management, what would it be?

The President and Vice President were also interviewed but asked a different series of questions (Figure 9). These sessions were more conversational in tone, and the researcher encouraged the subjects to elaborate and describe other areas that they deemed appropriate.

Figure 9

**Upper Management Interview Questions**

What are your roles and responsibilities?

What is going well at Compeer?

What would you like to see going better?

What improvement opportunities do you feel exist?

What are the factors constraining recruitment?

What is the ideal state of Compeer?
Three members of the support staff took part in a focus group. Each was provided with a participant form (Figure 10) in advance of the meeting so that she could begin with a clear idea of what was to be discussed. This was done partly to maximize the usefulness of the focus group and partly to assuage the anxieties Compeer team members had regarding the motivation and agenda of the researcher. Questions were discussed individually, with all participants reporting their answers to each question. This was a very effective process; group members built upon one another’s ideas and collectively provided thorough, relevant information.

Figure 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support Staff Focus Group Questions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What roles do you play in advancing Compeer objectives?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name three things that are going well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name three things that are not going so well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What improvement opportunities do you see?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you could ask any question of management, what would it be?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Data

No original quantitative research was included in the scope of this project. However, the Vice President and Research and Education Coordinator supplied an array of reports detailing key performance indicators such as new volunteer activations, terminated matches, and inquiry processing measurements. This data became important background and supporting information for the project.
Review of Relevant Literature

The researcher reviewed relevant academic literature (e.g. Block, 2000; Drucker, 1990; Manz & Sims, 1995; & Schein, 1988) to develop a basis for the project and support methods, findings, and recommendations. Nonprofit management, organization development, and consulting methods were the three broad categories of the literature review.

Conclusion

This chapter described the methodology used for the project. The researcher followed a literature-based framework in conducting multi-faceted research into Compeer. While benchmarking was not utilized for this project, qualitative and quantitative research, along with a literature review, were conducted to gather the information that provides the basis of this paper. The next chapter outlines research findings.
CHAPTER 4
Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the qualitative data gathered during the interview process. The information reflects a synthesis of input and comments from thirteen Compeer employees and is supported by extant quantitative data. Findings are grouped in two categories: 1) strengths, including human capital, key indicators, and 2) programming; and issues and concerns, divided into key indicators, organizational, process, and recruitment.

Strengths

Human capital

The current Compeer team is excellent. Staff members display dedication to advocating for those with mental illness and loyalty to the organization. Effective people are present at every level of the structure. Team building events and staff retreats have brought employees closer together and fostered a sense of shared purpose.

President/Executive Director

Ms. Skirboll is the founder of the organization. She exhibits vision, passion, energy, and a drive to succeed. Commitment to core beliefs is critical in leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1991). The top executive at Compeer embodies the ideals of the agency and models the highest level of care for volunteers and clients. She is well respected at all levels of the organization.
Vice President

Ms. Leanne Reed is eager to make a transition from management to leadership and to work with her team to accomplish organizational objectives. Ms. Reed has the talent to make a greater contribution to Compeer. She has the potential to become a more active change agent and to assist in strategic planning.

Coordinators of Volunteers

By every account this is a very strong staff of Coordinators of Volunteers (VC). These professionals exhibit enthusiasm for their jobs and a great deal of care for volunteers and clients. Moreover, VC insights into organizational matters were astute and forward thinking. During personal interviews any concerns raised by VC’s were accompanied by supportive and positive suggested improvements.

The VC team has the respect and confidence of the President and Vice President as well as the support staff. Their collective attitude is very positive.

Support Staff

The support team is professional and committed to the success of Compeer. There is a veteran leader of this team that is extremely knowledgeable about the organization and its processes.
Key Indicators

Data quality

The data available on the processes and performance of Compeer is very impressive. Not only does the information exist, it is easily accessed, understood, and explained by Compeer staff. Additionally, the recent addition of a Research Coordinator raises the potential for more in-depth statistical analysis of business processes. A complex understanding the volunteer audience and the way in which people become involved with Compeer is vital in strategy formulation.

Inquiries

Inquiries by prospective volunteers rose 27% from 2001 to 2002. This implies that the Compeer message is reaching an appropriate audience and that there is interest in the organization and its mission.

Processing time

There was a significant improvement in match processing time from 2001 to 2002. The time from inquiry to interview was cut by two weeks, on average, while the interview to activation was reduced from 3.1 months to 2.1 months, an impressive 32% difference. While there is much room for increased efficiency, these numbers show a noteworthy move in the proper direction.
Programming

30-year Anniversary

Many people expressed that the 30th Anniversary campaign is going very well. The milestone has brought a great deal of positive attention to the organization and has energized staff members.

East-West Challenge

The East-West Challenge was a recruiting function at local shopping malls that served the dual purpose of publicizing Compeer and generating inquiries. Nearly everyone interviewed hailed the event as a huge success.

Alternative events

There has been a huge improvement in the quality, frequency, and organization in the Friends-For-A-Day program. Additionally, Compeer calling, E-Buddy, and group events are reported to be showing momentum gains. These events, which target clients on the waiting list, allow Compeer to serve a greater number of clients, raise its profile in the community, and gain exposure to prospective volunteers, and as such are critical strategic elements.
Issues and Concerns

Key indicators

Waiting list

Compeer has consistently had nearly 300 people on its waiting list. It is worth noting that while the number of active matches has fluctuated dramatically, this number has remained constant.

Terminations versus activations

For the three-year period from 2000-2002, match terminations have exceeded new activations 374-338, or by approximately 10%. In other words, the agency is experiencing a net loss of active matches even though there were more new matches made in 2002 than in 2001 (117 compared to 106).

Organizational

Coordinators of Volunteers

The problem solving capacity of the VC Team is not being capitalized upon fully. As mentioned, these professionals provided a great deal of thoughtful insight and identified many improvement opportunities. Because the VC’s work on the external interface of Compeer, their talents, experience, and insights should are valuable when examining key business issues.
Support staff

Comments by the support team and professional staff indicate that the efforts of the two groups are disconnected. Reasons given for this included organizational politics, awkward reporting structure, ambiguous priorities, poor communication, lack of lead time on projects, and inconsistent levels of cooperation.

The support staff may be underutilized. Tasks such as appointment setting and getting reports from volunteers are critical but may be handled with greater ease and efficiency by support team members. This team is probably capable of increased contribution if more is asked of it.

Grant writing

There is consensus at all levels that the current practice of contracting for grant writing is not ideal. The consultant currently in use was cited as being inconsistent, out of touch with Compeer, and even disruptive. There were no positive comments on this arrangement.

Process

Meetings

Compeer meetings need to be examined, as numerous concerns were raised regarding their effectiveness. They are characterized as routine, repetitive, and a poor use of staff time. There are too many regular meetings focused more on reporting to management than on problem solving and strategic planning. Action items are often neglected once
identified, as formal mechanisms for recording, execution, and follow-up accountability do not exist.

Planning, organization, and communication
A majority of staff members emphasized the need for better project planning. Managers frequently give assignments with short lead times. While every organization encounters unexpected issues, in many cases management is aware of these tasks for some time before they are delegated. Ad hoc, last minute, high priority projects disrupt the normal workflow and should be avoided whenever possible. Besides being inefficient, the pressure exerted by these tasks causes emotional stress for team members, who feel they are neither in a position to refuse nor in a position to put forth high quality work. Resentment was also expressed over clerical tasks being assigned to professional staff even when there is not a pressing deadline.

Data management
Data necessary for required reports flows from volunteers to Coordinators of Volunteers to the Vice President or Research and Education Coordinator. All involved parties believe that too much time and energy are devoted to this activity. It is also suspected that there is redundancy of efforts.
Recruitment

External

There is a significant gap between the expectations of management and actual execution of external recruiting. While job descriptions and conversations with Compeer leadership indicate that each VC should spend approximately 25% of his or her time on presentations and outreach recruitment activities, those queried estimated the portion of their time spent on these endeavors to be less than 10%.

Direct community contact is a stated priority of Compeer. However, these efforts are not receiving the attention they deserve.

Attitudes

Coordinators of Volunteers are decidedly uncomfortable with any recruitment that they equate with selling. Comments made described a false feeling, a hatred for cold calling, and resistance to sacrificing time selling that could be spent counseling. As a result, recruitment slides down the priority list, while managerial emphasis on recruitment numbers damages morale.

It is important to recognize that every VC is engaged in recruitment. Each commonly encourages current volunteers to refer prospective matches, spends a lot of energy networking, and spreads the Compeer message in the community. Team members did not express any negative attitudes toward these important activities.
Conclusion

This chapter summarized the data collected from Compeer representatives. Strengths, issues, and concerns were detailed. The next chapter will outline the recommendations of the researcher. Certain action items directly address problems outlined in this chapter. Others are more general suggestions based on best practices or responding to challenges raised during research that did not fit neatly into the categories used here.
CHAPTER 5

Recommendations

Introduction

The most important deliverable of this project is a set of options for future action. As in the previous chapter, recommendations are categorized as aligning with key indicators, organizational issues, processes, and recruitment. Recommendations that do not fit into these classifications, but are worthy of inclusion in this document, are listed next. A final section contains tools that can help with future problem identification and strategy formulation.

Key Indicators

Waiting list

As mentioned, the Compeer waiting list has held steady at around 300 people for several years. Rather than wasting time and energy attempting to eliminate the waiting list, it is important to recognize it as a fact of the business. This acceptance need not signify a concession that Compeer cannot serve referred clients awaiting a match.

Activities like Friends-For-A-Day target people on the waiting list. Cultivation and expansion of these events are a direct response to the waiting list and a commitment to serving this population until matches can be made. Compeer possesses the capacity to work with these individuals and is wisely making it a strategic priority to do so.
Average length of time spent on the waiting list is a better key quantitative indicator than the number of people on it. Research can be used to determine acceptable and ideal timeframes, at which point strategies can be devised to achieve them.

Performance goals

Clearer understanding of how matches are made, specifically relevant percentages, will allow Compeer to set realistic expectations. For example, examinations of 2002 inquiries and activations show a 30% conversion rate. Further scrutiny, however, shows that over half of these activations came from word-of-mouth, and that inquiries from this source converted at nearly 60%. Also, media-generated inquiries converted at more than 34% and these activations accounted for another 19% of the year's total. The remaining 28% of new activations came from a wide variety of sources that had conversion rates ranging from 5%-25%, none of which yielded more than 10 new activations. This view of numbers shows that growth in the volunteer base will likely come in small increments, and that 20% is an aggressive conversion target for sources other than word-of-mouth.

Organizational

Employee empowerment

Employee empowerment is a sensible strategic tactic for Compeer Rochester. Empowerment is the act of delegating authority to others to decide and act within negotiated boundaries (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). Three critical elements of empowerment are: 1) sharing information so that people understand personal and organizational performance levels; 2) imposing a structure within which employees can
pursue organizational objectives; and 3) developing teams to replace the traditional hierarchical structure (Quinn & Spreitzer).

Empowerment is based on the assumption that people know best how to organize to serve the customer in the most efficient, effective manner (Block, 1996). This is a logical notion at Compeer. Coordinators of Volunteers are performing client-related tasks each day and are well equipped to fine tune processes. Allowing and encouraging input from VC’s into strategic planning capitalizes on their expertise and experience (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

Nonprofit agencies owe employees a work environment in which they can develop new skills, take on challenging assignments, and have the trust and autonomy necessary to succeed (Letts, Ryan, & Grossman, 1999). This describes a culture of empowerment.

The current Compeer climate is ripe for empowerment principles. A commitment to empowering employees could take the agency to new levels of effectiveness (Sashkin & Rosenbach, 2003). Real participation leads to increased satisfaction and commitment from employees (Manz & Sims, 1995).

Team structure

There comes a point when managers have to look at what a job requires and the job design, rather than relying on tradition and trying to make small improvements on the way things have always been done (Drucker, 1990). The work of Compeer VC’s can
better be accomplished if the group functions as a team at times other than in meetings. A team is a lot more effective than an individual (Silver & Mindszenthy, 2001). Teams have two assets that exceed those of individuals in that they possess more knowledge and they think in a greater variety of ways (Kayser, 1990). A team of VC’s is an ideal unit for learning and performance (Senge, 1990).

Suggested goals of the VC team:

- Learn new problem solving techniques and apply them to the right problems (Isgar, 1989)
- Streamline the match process
- Expand group and non-traditional events
- Align group events and one-to-one matches to ensure consistent quality service
- Implement word-of-mouth referral campaign
- Identify best practices
- Turn redundancies into efficiencies in data reporting (Goldratt, 1992)
- Establish better workflow with support staff
- Re-integrate the managing and doing of work (Block, 1996)

Management would evaluate the team as a unit, and performance objectives would be expressed at the group level.
Creating a team structure for VC’s is not without its challenges. Managers can empower, but employees have to want to reclaim autonomy and work independently (Block, 1996). Tough challenges face the organization and the employees.

In a team structure, teammates rely on one another and police one another. It is up to the team to hold itself accountable for producing data in a timely fashion.

Several VC’s expressed concern at the way work is currently assigned. However, the disruption created by last minute directives is as much the fault of the VC’s as the assigning manager. In a true team environment, the team supports its own. Assignments are accepted, and then team members meet independently to decide how the work will get done. They communicate concerns and results to the boss as a group (Block & Markowitz, 2001).

An awareness of how teams support organizational purpose is necessary; it is important for individuals to understand the links between their work, the team’s purpose, and the organization’s purpose (Isgar, 1989). The current staff of VC’s is sufficiently cognizant of Compeer objectives to make a team structure excel.

Ideally, the VC team will be able to quickly reach decisions, respond to internal and external customers, and complete projects. Accomplishment of team goals leads to accomplishment of Compeer goals. A true team wins, loses, and celebrates together (Isgar, 1989).
Management

If a team structure is adopted, top management will have to adjust to a changing role (Block, 1996; Manz & Sims, 1995).

In order for the team structure to succeed, managers need to believe in the notion and have confidence in its potential for improvement (Isgar, 1989). The team leader has an obligation to clearly state expectations, support the team with feedback, and devote time to focus on team development and performance (Isgar).

The roles of the Vice President and President in this structure of empowerment can be summarized in twelve objectives:

1. Try to get the team to solve problems on its own.
2. Help the team solve conflict within its group.
3. Tell people when they do something well.
4. Tell the truth even when it may be disagreeable or painful.
5. Encourage team members to discuss problems openly.
6. Ask for a solution to a problem rather than dictating or proposing a solution.
   People promote what they create.
7. Encourage teams to set performance goals
8. Provide teams with the information they need to run their business.
9. Anticipate future problems or situations (planning).
10. Encourage team self-evaluation.
11. Train teams in the philosophy of the company.

12. Be a resource to the team.


A manager faced with a fundamental shift in responsibilities can focus on opportunities for personal and professional improvement or dwell on loss of power. Ideally, gains made by implementing a team structure will be complemented by gains made by executives as a result of increased time to focus on organizational strategy.

Support staff

A decision regarding support staff roles cannot be made independently of those affecting overall structure. However, it is imperative to ensure that support professionals are working with professional staff in a constructive fashion to advance Compeer goals. The priorities of the two groups are identical; workflow should reflect this.

Vacant position

Opinions vary on how to utilize the development position that is currently being filled by a contractor. Compeer employees consistently indicated, however, that a permanent employee is a better arrangement. Some suggestions from staff members are outlined below.

1. Hire a development director. If this person is to be placed in charge of grant management and expected to play an important role in fundraising, a careful job
search is necessary. Effective screening and selection is based on competencies—characteristics necessary to perform tasks—rather than on tasks themselves (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994). The level at which Compeer can pay this individual may necessitate hiring someone with little experience. Inexperience can be overcome by energy, enthusiasm, and a natural affinity for the activities entailed in the job.

2. The position could be used to employ an external relations specialist. This person would deal with media management and public relations but also work with referring therapists and their support staffs to build mutually beneficial systems. Outreach recruitment, including presentations about Compeer and volunteer prospecting, can be another key component of the job.

3. A third option is to hire a permanent grant writer that could also perform tasks related to match processing or volunteer management. It would be possible for this person to work in concert with the Research and Education Coordinator to produce summary reports. In this case a young professional with strong writing skills and a team-orientation could be a valuable asset to Compeer.

The overall Compeer structure will necessarily influence a decision regarding this salary line. As the mission and future direction of the organization are clarified it will become easier to determine how to best utilize these dollars. This is an opportunity to fill performance gaps.
Process

Meetings

Although a high level of frustration was expressed about meetings, they cannot be eliminated. While meetings need not be held out of habit, group sessions are the lifeblood of organizations (Kayser, 1990). With that understood, an examination of the purpose and format of Compeer meetings is definitely in order.

A good first step is changing whom meetings serve. At present, it appears that they serve management, but they should serve Compeer clients (Block, 1996). That is to say, meetings focused on problem solving and organizational improvement are more useful than those consisting of reporting activities to managers. The latter can be accomplished in individual sessions, through status reporting, or by leaders circulating around the building to see what is happening.

In his 1990 book Mining Group Gold, Thomas A. Kayser used a gold mine metaphor to examine meetings. When a manager regards each group session as a gold mine of ideas, thoughts, solutions, approaches, and insights, and assumes the role of miner, positive outcomes follow.

Kayser (1990) offers the following guidelines for planning group sessions:

1. What are the session’s purpose and desired outcomes?
2. Is a group session necessary?
3. Who should attend the session?
4. What can be learned about leveraging the chemistry of this group?
5. What is the agenda content and topical flow?

Setting a strong agenda and inviting only necessary players are important first steps to maximizing the utility of meetings.

Meetings generate action items. Strategies for implementation are discussed in detail later in this paper.

Refine volunteer training

Recruiting and maintaining volunteers are critical if optimum client service is to be delivered. There are a number of ways that the training function influences organizational performance.

Efficiency of training processes merits heavy emphasis. Length of the training program is a key business indicator; however, a narrow but important distinction must be maintained between efficiency and hurry. Each topic addressed in the volunteer training is necessary and important – none can be excluded to shorten the process. Therefore, efficiency in the timing of training delivery is a fundamental objective.
Moving people through the training process is important because the Compeer staff can accommodate a finite number of trainees at any given time. Completion of the program by one volunteer clears space for a new volunteer to begin.

Because staff time is overextended — trainers are also involved with recruitment and client support — effective training that yields well-equipped volunteers is another priority. Rushing new people through the training process will strain staff at the match support stage. An ill-prepared volunteer will require more Compeer support once the match is activated. The opportunity cost of extra time spent on the remediation of volunteers is training of new volunteers. Time saved through haphazard training is lost and the employee's schedule is disrupted by ad hoc performance interventions.

A solid training program increases retention (Hiltrop, 1999). This notion is normally applied to employees but is equally true for volunteers. Retaining effective volunteers is another key to the Compeer strategy.

Recruitment
As stated earlier, the leading strategic goal of Compeer is to serve the greatest possible number of referred clients. Recruiting and maintaining volunteers are critical if optimum client service is to be accomplished. Compeer founder, President, and Executive Director Bernice Skirboll (personal communication, February 11, 2003) stated, “Our volunteers are Compeer. Raising money is important, but without volunteers all the money in the world won’t help us achieve (our goals).” Recruitment takes place from the time a
person is identified as a potential volunteer and continues through all stages of the volunteer experience. VC’s treat the entire screening, selection, and training process as recruitment so as not to lose an interested candidate. Active volunteers are recruited to make greater contributions to the organization and to refer new volunteers. Even people who have terminated service can be recruited to return in some capacity or to continue spreading the word of Compeer.

A different view of recruitment

The term recruitment is applied broadly to a wide range of Compeer activities. While all are designed to increase the volunteer base, differentiation may facilitate easier strategic planning and resource deployment. Recruitment activities can be logically categorized as internal or external.

External recruitment is aimed at people who are not currently involved with Compeer. It includes outreach events like the East-West Challenge and Volunteer Fairs as well as presentations to companies and community groups.

Internal recruitment targets people who are already working with Compeer. Asking people that volunteer at a group event or Friends-For-A-Day activity to consider becoming a one-to-one volunteer is an example of internal recruitment. Another is encouraging current volunteers to refer new inquiries.
An effective nonprofit marketing plan employs different tactics for different target audiences (Drucker, 1990). Distinguishing between internal and external recruitment clarifies objectives and eases ambiguity of messages.

*Coordinators of Volunteers*

External recruitment as defined in the previous section is not appropriate for VC’s. The high level of discomfort these professionals have for sales-type activities was detailed earlier. It is more easily understood when one considers the seven traits of super-sellers Kotler & Andreasen (1991) identified when studying nonprofit agencies:

1. High energy
2. Abounding self-confidence
3. Chronic hunger for rewards
4. Well-established habit of industry
5. State of mind that regards each objection, rejection, resistance, or obstacle as a challenge
6. Empathy
7. Ego-drive

Many of these characteristics are present in people in helping professions. However, two that are uncommon, or even undesirable, in human service workers are chronic hunger for rewards and ego-drive. The absence of these underlying traits - competencies - makes it very unlikely that a Coordinator of Volunteers will be a successful seller (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994). Imposing unrealistic expectations diminishes job
satisfaction and causes emotional strain that will eventually lead to job burnout (Kotler & Andreasen, 1991).

VC’s are capable of planning, implementing, and evaluating all aspects of internal recruiting. The audience has already had contact with the staff and previewed the organization. VC’s have a great deal of credibility with the volunteers that can be a huge asset in internal recruitment.

A low-pressure referral program aimed at current volunteers is a potential source of new volunteers. The Coordinators of Volunteers are crucial in this initiative.

Management

Responsibility for external recruitment shifts to the Vice President and the Executive Director. These high-profile individuals create a great deal of impact when in direct contact with members of the community. Their titles will provide access to influential people; other executives and elected officials are more likely to accept a meeting with a President or Vice President than with a caseworker. Such meetings can lead to the formation of valuable corporate partnerships. Prospective volunteers will be impressed with meeting top Compeer officials, and flattered that these executives took the time to greet them personally. Involving executives in the recruiting effort sends a clear message about the importance of volunteers.
Top managers typically possess the key competencies of a salesperson or recruiter. They tend to be personable, extroverted, gregarious, and comfortable in business and social settings. Possession of these traits gives executives the capability to effectively recruit new volunteers (Rothwell & Kazanas, 1994).

Public Relations

Speeches are great public relations tools (Smith et al., 2000). The more talks the President and Vice President can give for corporations, community groups, or schools, the better.

A media-only page on the Compeer website is an idea worth exploring (Smith et al., 2000). It provides a convenient mechanism for disseminating important information to print and broadcast outlets.

It is interesting to note that a Gallup Poll cited by Kotler and Andreasen (1991) shows that only 5% of volunteers nationwide initially learned of that activity from advertising outlets. This compels one to consider whether the role of media advertising is one of introduction or one of awareness. The data supports the notion that advertising triggers people to inquire more than it notifies them of volunteer opportunities.
Trend

Kotler and Andreasen (1991) note a trend from served to service, in which clients of nonprofit agencies reciprocate with their own service. Former Compeer clients can be targeted as prospective volunteers.

Other Recommendations

Internal research

A demographic profile of all current volunteers will provide the basis for targeted marketing efforts. This study is an ideal deployment of the Research and Education Coordinator resource.

Also, research indicates that most volunteers have several exposures to Compeer before initial inquiry. Determining the average number of contacts before volunteers come to the organization will help inform marketing decisions.

Leadership development

Compeer Rochester has generally strong leadership. However, it is as important for executives to continually upgrade their skill sets as it is for employees to grow and develop professionally. Strategic leadership development equips managers to deal with changes in the internal and external environments.

It is sound business practice for the President and Vice President to create a plan of professional and leadership development. This consists of identifying improvement areas
and devising strategies to address them (Brown & Associates, 2002). Allocating resources for each of these professionals to participate in some type of leadership development every two to three years is a sound investment.

*Utilize the resource of local colleges and universities*

There are seven higher learning institutions within thirty minutes of the Compeer office. All offer graduate and undergraduate programs, and each has at least one program in which students can do work for the organization and receive course credit simultaneously. There are numerous ways in which Compeer can leverage this resource.

1. Hire a data analysis intern. This person could work with the Research and Education Coordinator on quantitative initiatives. Interns normally need to commit 150 or more hours over a ten to fifteen week period to fulfill the school requirement. Ideal candidates would have a background in math, statistics, or business.

2. Enlist a team of MBA students to devise a marketing and recruitment plan. This is an ideal capstone project for a graduate program in business, particularly marketing.

3. Minor grant writing can be outsourced as a class project for human service or social work students. These grants are likely to be very well written because they will be reviewed by instructors and submitted for grades. Lead time is important,
so these initiatives may need to be low priority, ideal because these are precisely
the grants that a staff grant writer may have difficulty making time for.

4. One or a group of students can design and administer a satisfaction survey to
current volunteers. Human Resource Development or marketing students might
be ideal for this work. Retention is vital if the number of matches is to grow, and
knowing what affects volunteer happiness will aid retention and help to recruit
new volunteers.

Establishing partnerships with local colleges and universities gives Compeer access to
expertise that may not exist internally. Community relationships are also fostered,
generating positive public relations.

*Commit to learning*

Compeer has achieved enormous success in its first thirty years. A changing social
landscape presents the agency with new challenges for the next thirty. Learning and
improvement are critical for continued growth and prosperity.

Leaders that build their organization around information and communication open new
paths to goal attainment (Drucker, 1990). Because no one has been able to contrive a
model that can be applied universally to solve business problems, it is critical that
managers be provided with feedback in order to evaluate the quality of decisions
(Argyris, 1976). However, many commonly held notions of organizational protocol and
etiquette, not to mention politics, inhibit effective feedback. Young professionals are taught that it is inappropriate to question the decisions of those in positions of authority.

Moreover, the literature suggests that the factors that inhibit valid feedback tend to become increasingly more operative as the decisions become more important and as they become more threatening to participants in the decision-making processes; that is, valid information appears to be more easily generated for less important and less threatening decisions (Argyris, 1976, pp. 366-367).

Learning in organizations is encouraged only to the point where the fundamental design, structure, and values of the organization are not questioned or threatened (Argyris, 1976). This is what Argyris calls single-loop learning. People are unwilling to examine controversial issues, and nonproductive behaviors are perpetuated. Instead of focusing on discovering the best possible solutions, time is wasted attempting to please superiors, suppressing negative feelings, face-saving, and accumulating power through knowledge unshared (Argyris, 1976).

Argyris (1986) suggests that managers have elevated counterproductive behavior to a skill. "Skilled Incompetence" is the title he gives to the phenomenon in which people become so adept at avoiding conflict and hurt feelings that the result is often organizational havoc. He describes "Four easy steps to chaos":

1. Design a clearly ambiguous message. For example, "Be innovative and take risks, but be careful."
2. Ignore any inconsistencies in the message.
3. Make the ambiguity and inconsistency in the message undiscussable. The whole point of sending a mixed message is to avoid dealing with a situation straight on. Challenging the message would disrupt the dynamic.
4. Make the undiscussability also undiscussable. One of the best ways to do this is to send the mixed messages in a setting that is not conducive to open inquiry. Mixed messages, defensiveness, suspiciousness, and mistrust are all too prevalent in today’s workplace (Argyris, 1986). All inhibit organizational learning and hinder progress. Encouraging information sharing and open communications among all levels of employees will help Compeer thrive.

*Systems thinking*

Diagnosing business problems is a critical managerial skill. Senge (1990) uses the parable of the boiled frog to illustrate organizational learning. A frog dropped in boiling water will immediately jump out, yet a frog placed in a pot of lukewarm water will stay there even when heat is applied until it is eventually boiled to death. Crises are obvious; businesses must be able to examine slow, gradual processes to identify problem areas.

Weisbord (1976) designed a model for monitoring the health of an organization. It is shown in Figure 11.
Figure 11

Weisbord’s Six-Box Organizational Model


This model uses six boxes to represent the organization. When things are going poorly, these dimensions are a good starting point in the search for root causes (Burke, 1994).

Managing change

A key assumption of the change process is that team members will be actively involved in generating remedies to business problems because they know best what will work in
the Compeer culture and structure (Schein, 1988). It is important to look inside the organization for innovation (Drucker, 1990).

Another critical aspect of the change process is involving the gatekeepers early in the initiative (Smith et al., 2000). At Compeer, the Director of Internal Operations has a tremendous influence on how priorities are set and how work flows in the organization. As long as this is true, this person is an important change agent.

Other Tools

A model for implementing strategy

Smith et al. (2000) outline a simple model for strategy implementation, shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12

A model for implementing strategy

1. Tactics
2. Timelines
3. Responsible parties
4. Resource requirements
5. Anticipated results
6. Evaluation measures


Considering each of these factors gives managers a checklist of implementation elements.
A model for planning

A simple two-by-two model (shown in Figure 13) can help with setting priorities and planning.

Figure 13

A model for planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ease of Implementation</th>
<th>Items to work in when time is available</th>
<th>“Low-hanging fruit” – items for immediate action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Non-actionable items</td>
<td>Items to be considered long-term strategic goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact

Adapted from Nadler and Tushman (1989) and Covey (1990).

Action items identified during the planning process can be plotted on this instrument. Considering ease of implementation and impact on the organization informs choices on which items to enact and in what order.
Next Steps

The recommendations of the researcher span a broad array of topics that includes organizational considerations, process issues, and recruitment initiatives. The challenge to Compeer is to consider these recommendations, refine them as necessary, and act on those that can have a positive impact on the organization's success.

Compeer and Human Resource Development

This project validated a number of assertions contained in the literature review.

Human capital in nonprofit organizations

Literature (Drucker, 1990; Kotler & Andreasen, 1991; Letts et al., 1999) suggests that committed, capable employees are the primary strength of nonprofit organizations. This proved true at Compeer, where strong individuals are present at each level of the agency.

Empowerment

Numerous authors (Drucker, 1990; Kotler & Andreasen, 1991; Smith et al., 2000) advocate employee empowerment in nonprofit settings. The Coordinator of Volunteers team at Compeer is a unit that could benefit greatly from empowerment principles. Creating a team structure and approaching problem solving from a group perspective are opportunities for organizational improvement.
Consultative process

The researcher provided a neutral, objective assessment of the current organization. Because they have a limited personal stake in selected outcomes, third-party consultants are able to function outside of organizational politics. Utilization of a neutral individual may be the only way that highly sensitive issues get openly addressed.

Utilization of a third-party consultant led to thoughtful self-reflection by Compeer employees. The diagnostic interventions moved participants to a higher level of cognition than that of everyday work, supporting the contentions of Schein (1988). The volume of this report is evidence of the insights gained from the project.

Smith et al. (2000) endorse the use of outside consultants by nonprofit organizations. This project and others outlined in Chapter 5 demonstrate the value that working with third-party consultants can provide to Compeer.

Collaborative approach

The researcher followed the Block (2000) approach to consulting. Adherence to these principles fostered mutual understanding between the consultant and client, efficient data collection, and tangible results.

This project was an example of the collaborative approach to consulting. The consultant and client shared responsibility for its execution. Block (2000) and Schein (1988)
advocate this methodology because it combines the expertise of the consultant and the unique business knowledge of the client to maximize results.

Problem identification

Schein (1988) makes a distinction between presenting problems and actual problems. He contends that the organizational concern that attracts managerial attention is often a symptom of a deeper-rooted issue. This was the case for Compeer. The Board of Directors sought an external consultant to address unsatisfactory external recruitment efforts. Completion of this project revealed that recruitment difficulties stem from the actual structure of the organization. Assigning responsibility for volunteer recruitment to Coordinators of Volunteers virtually assures that goals will remain unmet. These professionals do not possess the time, interest, or competencies to be effective recruiters. Top managers, on the other hand, have the credibility and skill sets for outreach activities. Time being spent closely managing daily staff activities would be much better spent working in the community to identify prospective volunteers. Implementation of a self-managing team structure will afford executives the necessary time to carry out recruitment strategies.

Competency modeling

Rothwell and Kazanas (1994) define a competency as any characteristic, knowledge, skill, or attitude that will help an individual succeed in a job. Job competencies were a key consideration of this project. One of the primary impediments to meeting objectives at Compeer is the improper assignment of tasks to employees that do not possess the
personal characteristics to execute them. VC’s lack the selling competencies necessary to effectively recruit new volunteers. Compeer executives are better equipped for external recruitment because those competencies match other job requirements and are likely to be found in those filling managerial roles.

*Opportunities for Future Research*

*Self-managing teams in nonprofit agencies*

The use of self-managing teams (SMT) in nonprofit settings is a subject worthy of field research. Financial constraints of these organizations make de-layering the organizational hierarchy an attractive strategy. However, there is insufficient academic evidence that the structure can be effectively applied to nonprofit agencies. Frameworks that differentiate between nonprofit and for-profit SMT would be useful for practitioners.

*Managing organizational growth*

Organizational growth can be a difficult process. The challenge to leaders to adapt from entrepreneurship to management is daunting. There is an extensive body of literature on applying human resource development principles to solve business problems. Research focused specifically on dealing with problems associated with organizational growth would contribute nicely to the HRD field.

*Conclusion*

Compeer Rochester is a successful, thriving nonprofit organization. By capitalizing on the opportunities for improvement detailed in this paper, the organization can help to
secure its future serving client needs. By upgrading internal processes, empowering employees, implementing a team structure, and shifting primary responsibility for external recruitment to the executive level, Compeer will more effectively utilize its human capital to achieve organizational goals.

This project validates the use of the consultative process and the application of HRD principles in nonprofit organizations. Using a neutral, third party consultant affords organizations an objective insight into process and technical issues. Adopting a collaborative approach ensures that the consultant and client will work together to solve problems so that they stay solved (Block, 2000). The nonprofit environment is ideally suited for employee empowerment and a team structure. Applying these mechanisms increases employee retention and satisfaction while allowing the agency to maximize social impact.

Opportunities for future research revealed by this project include the deployment of self-managing teams in nonprofit organizations and the effective use of HRD practices and principles to manage organizational growth.

Nonprofit organizations face a wide range of challenges. While some are unique, others are not radically different from those affecting for-profit companies. Applying proven management principles such as employee empowerment, self-managing teams, and competency modeling engenders high-performance nonprofit organizations that can create the greatest possible social impact.
For thirty years, Compeer has been helping people diagnosed with mental illness to lead happy lives. For this project, the roles were reversed and an outside consultant helped Compeer examine processes and structure to identify improvement opportunities. This "circle of helping" is a positive pattern that can be nurtured and sustained in the future, with Compeer drawing from the community a strength that is returned in the form of meaningful service. It is gratifying for the researcher to know that the expertise offered during this process will eventually enrich the experience of Compeer clients.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Original Proposal

January 12, 2003

Mr. Arthur Roberts
Director, Human Resources & Vice President, Office Imaging
Eastman Kodak Company
Compeer, Inc. Board of Directors
343 State Street
Rochester, NY 14650-0232

Dear Mr. Roberts –

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with you and the other representatives of Compeer. The purpose of this letter is to outline my proposed approach to the project we discussed.

Background

My understanding of the current situation at Compeer in Rochester is that seven Coordinators of Volunteers report to the Vice President, Ms. Leanne Reed. Each Coordinator of Volunteers is responsible for the recruitment, selection, training, and support of Compeer volunteers as well as providing support for clients. These professionals act as liaisons with referring therapists and manage the relationships between clients, therapists, and volunteers. Compeer Rochester currently supports approximately 360 peer matches while carrying a waiting list of over 300 referred clients. There is concern that the current job designs and organizational structure are constraining recruitment activities, and subsequently preventing Compeer from serving the maximum number of clients. The Compeer staff and Board of Directors wish to have an independent third-party consultant review the current design of the organization and identify opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness.

Plan of Action

Personal interviews

I will conduct a series of targeted qualitative interviews with key Compeer staff members. The Vice President and each Coordinator of Volunteers will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview. Questions will be designed to discern information about processes, preferences, organizational strengths, and need areas. The St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board will approve the interview content and all responses will be kept confidential. These interviews will provide key information for the job and organization analyses.
Focus groups

I would like to conduct a focus group with the Compeer administrative staff. The discussion will focus on workflow, customer service, and opportunities for process improvement. While input from this contingent is important, I do not think it is necessary or practical to interview each employee individually. The focus group will allow for the collection of appropriate qualitative data in a relatively brief period of time. I am also interested in capitalizing on the synergistic dynamic typical of focus groups.

A focus group for the Vice President and the Coordinators of Volunteers as a follow up activity to the personal interviews may be necessary if clarification is called for after the individual meetings. I do not anticipate a need for this focus group but I am including it in the project proposal to prepare participants for the possibility.

Quantitative data analysis

As discussed, I will use currently available quantitative data to identify key indicators of organizational performance. This portion of the project should move quickly, as I understand that reporting is a definitive strength of Compeer. Understanding of performance indicators is crucial for future program evaluation.

Data analysis and literature review

During and after these initial meetings, I will assemble the collected data and compare the current state to the ideal state. This process should uncover patterns, matches, gaps, and redundancies. Additionally, research and review of relevant literature will provide insights into best practices and benchmarking opportunities. Synthesis of internal and external information is critical in devising an array of sound action plans.

Presentation of consultant’s report

The deliverable of this project is a written consultant’s report detailing the data gathered during the aforementioned process and providing a snapshot of the current Compeer situation. My goal is to objectively present a comprehensive series of options for future business activities.

I will tentatively plan to present these findings to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in late March 2003 and to the full Board and Compeer staff in April 2003. These presentations are flexible and completely at the discretion of the project sponsors.

Follow up

I will be available for progress checks and project evaluation upon completion of the report. Timeframe for follow up activities is negotiable and can be crystallized in April 2003.
Investment

Because I am completing this project to satisfy the requirements of GHRD590, Applied Research in HRD, at St. John Fisher College, Compeer will not be charged a fee for my consulting services. To maximize the effectiveness of this project, I will need access to Compeer professionals and relevant data, responsiveness to information requests, and ad hoc clerical services (e.g. copies). I am confident that we can collaborate to produce a useful report.

Please discuss this proposal with all relevant parties and decide if you would like to proceed with the project. I would appreciate it if you would notify me of your intentions by Friday, January 17, 2003.

I am happy to provide any clarification or additional information you need. I can be reached by phone at 585.385.8072 (work), 585.802.4983 (cell), or 585.533-1258 (home). My e-mail is kelly@sjfc.edu.

I look forward to hearing from you and eagerly await the opportunity to work with Compeer.

Regards,

Scott M. Kelly

c.c. Mr. Ben Giambrone, Ms. Bernice Skirboll, Ms. Leanne Reed
APPENDIX B

IRB PROPOSAL

Submitted to: St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board
From: Scott M. Kelly – GHRD590
Study: Compeer Organization Development

Introduction

Compeer is a not-for-profit organization that matches community volunteers in supportive friendship relationships with children and adults receiving mental health treatment (www.compeer.org, 2003). Compeer is a French word that means companion, peer or equal.

Established in Rochester, NY in 1973, Compeer, Inc. has touched in 28 years the lives of tens of thousands of adults and children with mental illness. Today, Compeer is located in 30 states, Canada, and Australia. Intentionally, there are over 100 Compeer programs. The mission of Compeer is to utilize community volunteers in supportive friendship relations to help people diagnosed with mental illness to live happier and more productive lives.

Compeer, Inc. 2001 Annual Report

Currently Compeer in Rochester has seven Coordinators of Volunteers that report to the Vice President, Ms. Leanne Reed. Each Coordinator of Volunteers is responsible for the recruitment, selection, training and support of Compeer volunteers as well as support for clients. These professionals act as liaisons with referring therapists and manage the relationships between clients, therapists, and volunteers. Compeer Rochester currently supports approximately 360 peer matches while carrying a waiting list of over 300 referred clients. There is concern that the current job designs and organizational structure are constraining recruitment activities, and preventing Compeer from serving the maximum number of referred clients.
Purpose

The Compeer staff and Board of Directors want to have an independent consultant review the current design of the organization and identify opportunities for improvement. For this project, I will act as a third-party consultant to Compeer and produce a report that identifies a number of possible courses of action designed to increase the effectiveness of Compeer's recruitment efforts.

Methodology

Personal interviews

A series of targeted qualitative interviews will be conducted with key Compeer staff members. The President, Vice President, and each Coordinator of Volunteers will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview. Questions are designed to discern information about processes, preferences, organizational strengths, and need areas. The interview questions are included as Appendices A and B for IRB review. These interviews will provide key information for the job and organization analyses.

Focus groups

A focus group will be conducted with the Compeer administrative staff. The discussion will center on workflow, customer service, and opportunities for process improvement. A copy of the participant form is attached as Appendix C for IRB review. The focus group will allow for the collection of appropriate qualitative data in a relatively brief period of time. It also capitalizes on the synergistic dynamic typical of focus groups.
Quantitative data analysis

As discussed, currently available quantitative data will be used to identify key indicators of organizational performance. No original quantitative research will be done in the course of this project.

Data analysis and literature review

During and after these initial meetings, collected data will be assembled and used to compare the current state to the ideal state. This process should uncover patterns, matches, gaps, and redundancies. Additionally, research and review of relevant literature will provide insights into best practices and benchmarking opportunities. Synthesis of internal and external information is critical in devising an array of sound action plans.

Sample Access

All interviews will be conducted in person at the Compeer office, located in Monroe Square in Rochester, New York.

Dissemination

The deliverable of this project will be a written consultant’s report detailing the data gathered during the aforementioned process and providing a snapshot of the current Compeer situation. The goal is to present objectively a comprehensive series of options for future business activities and, more specifically, for improving the success of recruitment efforts. The report will be given to Compeer for internal use, and submitted to Dr. Seth Silver in fulfillment of GHRD590 course requirements.
Presentations of these findings will be made to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors in late March 2003, to the full Board and Compeer staff in April 2003, and at the Master’s in Human Resource Development Student Colloquium in late spring.

Notes from original data collection will be kept in a locked room in my home office for a period of one year, at which time they will be destroyed. Raw qualitative data will not be provided to Compeer.

Consent

Each study participant will be provided a copy of the consent letter, Appendix D. Substituting distribution of this letter for an Informed Consent form will allow for more immediate project commencement.
Appendix A

Coordinator of Volunteers Interview Questions

How many matches do you currently manage?

How much time, on average, do you spend with each match monthly?

What portion of your time is spent recruiting?

Tell me about your recruiting activities.

What recruitment activities have been successful?

What recruitment activities have been ineffective?

What opportunities do you see for improvement (processes, case management, recruiting)?

If you had no responsibilities other than recruitment, what initiatives would you institute?

If you could ask any question of management, what would it be?
Appendix B

Upper Management Interview Questions

What are your roles and responsibilities?

What is going well at Compeer?

What would you like to see going better?

What improvement opportunities do you feel exist?

What are the factors constraining recruitment?

What is the ideal state of Compeer?
Appendix C

Support Staff Focus Group – Participant Form

What roles do you play in advancing Compeer objectives?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Name three things that are going well.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

Name three things that are not going so well.

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

What improvement opportunities do you see?

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

If you could ask any question of management, what would it be?

____________________________________________________________________
Appendix D

Consent Letter

TO: Compeer Employees
FROM: Scott Kelly, St. John Fisher College
DATE: February 4, 2003
SUBJ: Qualitative Research

My name is Scott Kelly, and I am a graduate student at St. John Fisher College, pursuing a Master of Science in Human Resource Development. As part of the program requirements I have agreed to act as an organization development consultant for a project at Compeer Rochester. The primary focus of this study is to determine ways in which Compeer can increase effectiveness of volunteer recruitment efforts. A critical element of this project is qualitative data collection from Compeer employees.

Your participation in this process will be in the form of a personal interview or a focus group. Because these interviews are considered research, the St. John Fisher College Institutional Review Board has approved the project as posing minimal risk to participants. All responses will be kept confidential; findings will be reported to the Compeer Board of Directors and senior management in anonymous summary form only. Study participants have the following rights:

1. Have the purpose of the study, and the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of appropriate alternative procedures or courses of treatment, if any, that might be advantageous to you.
5. Be informed of the results of the study.

Your participation in an interview or focus group implies consent to be a part of the study, and is greatly appreciated by the researcher and the organization.

If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher listed above at 585-385-8072 or the project advisor, Dr. Seth Silver, at 585-241-3038.

Thank you for your cooperation.
APPENDIX C

Presentation Slides

These slides were used when the consultant’s report was presented to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors and senior managers of Compeer on March 26, 2003.
Organizational Assessment Report
Comepeer of Rochester, New York

Prepared by:
Scott Kelly
St. John Fisher College
March 2003

Problem Statement
- There is concern that the current job designs and organizational structure are constraining volunteer recruitment activities and preventing Comepeer from serving the maximum number of referred clients. There is a need to analyze systems and processes and to review outside literature and best practices, in order to identify opportunities for improvement. Increased organizational effectiveness will allow Comepeer to have the greatest possible impact in the community.

Strengths
- Human Capital
  - President
  - Vice President
  - Coordinators of Volunteers
  - Support staff
- Key Indicators
  - Data quality
  - Inquiries
  - Processing time
- Programming
  - 50-year Anniversary
  - East-West Challenge
  - Alternative events

Issues and Concerns
- Key Indicators
  - Waiting list
  - Terminations versus activations
- Organizational
  - Support staff
  - Grant writing
- Process
  - Meetings
  - Planning, organization, and communication
  - Data management
- Recruitment
  - External
  - Attitudes
Recommendations

- Key Indicators
  - Waiting list
  - Performance goals
- Organizational
  - Employee empowerment
  - Team structure
  - Management
  - Support staff
  - Vacant position

Recommendations

- Process
  - Meetings
  - Refine volunteer training
- Recruitment
  - A different view – internal and external
  - VC role
  - Management role
  - Public relations

Other Recommendations

- Internal Research
- Leadership Development
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Commitment to Learning
- Systems Thinking
- Managing Change
- Tools
  - Strategy implementation checklist
  - Planning model

Dialogue

- What do you like about what you heard?
- What concerns, issues, or questions do you have?
- What are the next steps (short or long term)?