

Philanthropy Journal

OF NORTH CAROLINA

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Careful considerations

Finding the right consultant requires homework

Personal connection, clearly stated goals and financial frankness will make for a smoother relationship and greater success.

By EMILY BREWER

Nonprofits of all sizes sometimes need helping hands. But before hiring a consultant, a nonprofit's board and executive director need to take stock of themselves and do some hard thinking.

Choosing the right consultant or consulting firm requires careful deliberation, nonprofit managers and consultants say.

"A good consultant is one who listens well and is also aware of how well the client is listening," says Anne Arella, a new consultant in Raleigh. "It's all about good relationships and trust. Organizations need to hire someone who will maintain confidentiality, will represent them well in the community, will be positive and productive, and most of all, will produce results."

Pam Kohl has had good and bad experiences with consultants at the Poe Center for Health Education in Raleigh, where she serves as executive director.

CONSULTING

"I've had consultants come in and offer to do my job for the agency," says Kohl. "I've had experiences

where it was difficult every step of the way. It makes it worthwhile to say that good fit just needs to be there."

Finding that good fit begins with a good self-assessment. The people who run a nonprofit need to be able to articulate what they hope to achieve, in what time frame they hope to do so, and what resources the organization has to contribute.

Then it's time to start gathering referrals

and recommendations from places such as the N.C. Center for Nonprofits and from other nonprofits of a similar nature that have used consultants.

Each consultant on the list then should be checked out.

Look to see that the consultants have worked with nonprofits.

"If they are listing IBM and Glaxo, that is well and good, but that is not the same animal as working with a 501(c)(3) organization,"

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\$200 million and growing

Four decades serving community, donors

As the Foundation for the Carolinas celebrates its anniversary, it has initiated a change in grantmaking — in terms of the size of grants and issues targeted.

By PATTY COURTRIGHT

The Foundation for the Carolinas has turned 40.

While the foundation's scope has broadened to include issues that span two states, its mission to serve both the community and the donor has not.

The foundation was created in 1958 when 24 Charlotte business and community leaders established the United Community Foundation to support the Mecklenburg County area. Its first gift of \$3,000 came from United Way.

Today, what has evolved into the Foundation for the Carolinas has \$200 million in assets, manages more than 1,000 charitable funds and has

disbursed grants totaling \$140 million to programs in 13 counties across North Carolina and South Carolina. It is considered one of the largest community foundations in the South and among the top 25 in the United States.

During nearly half a century, the foundation's growth, in terms of assets and grantmaking, has soared. Within the past two years, the foundation has re-evaluated its grantmaking focus, shifting from a variety of smaller seed grants to providing larger grants that focus on a variety of causes and spark new ideas. Yet, foundation leaders feel they have remained true to the underlying philosophy and goals.

"Our new grantmaking focus has not changed our original mission," says William L. Spencer, president. "The original bylaws of the foundation call for it to be a flexible resource for the community in dealing with whatever issues need to

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The foundation supports children's programs

Technology, enterprise focus of conference for Tar Heel nonprofits

Using computers and the Internet to do a better job raising money, delivering services, managing your organization and getting out your message will be the focus of the *Philanthropy Journal's* fifth annual conference for North Carolina's nonprofits Oct. 29-30.

Featured speakers at the conference, to be held in Charlotte, include Hugh McColl, chairman and chief executive of NationsBank, and Karen Davis, president of The Commonwealth Fund in New York, one of the largest and oldest U.S. foundations.

The conference also will feature presentation of the 1998 North Carolina Philanthropy Award, as well as a special session on nonprofits as entrepreneurial organizations.

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Young people committed to change, collaboration, diversity

A new study commissioned by Public Allies says Generation X is committed to social change and that new models of leadership are needed to tap that commitment.

By TODD COHEN

Young Americans want to make a difference, and they want to do it by building alliances built around individuals and grass-roots organizations.

That's the conclusion of a new study that says change in the U.S. will come from small groups of resourceful individuals, not from individual leaders.

Young Americans "place a premium on a set of traits that represents

an extraordinary break from traditional models of American leadership," says the study, which was conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates in Washington, D.C., and commissioned by Public Allies, a national group that provides nonprofit apprenticeships for young people and helps develop them as leaders.

"Young people embrace a style of leadership that emphasizes the power of collective responsibility, cooperation among diverse individuals, sensitivity toward others, and equal participation by all citizens regardless of their authority or position in the community," the study says.

"Contrary to popular portrayal of today's young Americans as self-

absorbed and socially inert," it says, "the findings from this survey reveal a portrait of a generation not searching to distance itself from the community, but instead actively looking for new and distinctive ways to connect to the people and issues surrounding them."

Yet unlike the Baby Boomers who came of age in the 1960s and focused on political leaders and broad social institutions, the study says, the outlook of young Americans today is "distinctly personal, with a heavy emphasis on direct, one-on-one, individual service."

Young people "embrace a model of leadership that is best characterized as 'bottom up' rather than 'top down,'" the study says, and "place a premium on the efficacy of small groups of people working together to effect change in tangible ways."

Young people also place a high priority on diversity and "reaching out to connect to and work with people from different backgrounds to

"If you're going to have a strong family, you've got to have a strong community."

— Meredith Emmett
Executive Director of N.C. Public Allies

address problems and formulate solutions."

The biggest overall impact on young Americans is the increase in divorce and single-parent families.

The breakup of the traditional family, says Meredith Emmett, executive director of North Carolina Public Allies, is directly related to the desire among young people to get involved in their communities.

"If you're going to have a strong family, you've got to have a strong community," she says. "You've got to have good schools, you've got to live in a safe neighborhood, your kids have got to have safe places to go after school."

For a copy of the study, call Public Allies at (202) 822-1180.

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Duke University has received a boost to its effort to attract gifted students, thanks to a \$20 million gift.

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