

ESC-US – 5/31/16 Call Notes – Topic: “Corporate Engagement – Are You Connected?”

Facilitator: Yvonne Van Haltsma, Bayer Center Pittsburgh

Notes: Paul Moore, ESC Oklahoma City

Amber Cote, Center for Nonprofit Excellence, Colorado Springs

Darlyne Koretos, Member-at-large

Craig Kowalski, ESC Cincinnati

David Factor, ESC of Southern California

David Palmquist, ESC of Tri-Cities

Ron Swofford, ESC Houston

Jan Burrell, 501 Commons, Seattle

Julie Crockford, ESC New England

Sue Pollack, Impact Broward Inc.

Tom Mongeon, ESC Maine/NH/VT

Trudy Smith, ESC Triangle

Darlyne Koretos welcomed us to the call and introduced Yvonne Van Haltsma as the facilitator for this call. Yvonne outlined the process and called on each participant in turn to share their thoughts on this topic.

Amber – Pilot with three major corporations that have done site visits at non-profits based on corporate skill sets and values alignment. Put together a team of staff to address a specific challenge. Also doing board training at businesses and doing matches with them. No fees being charged in the pilot stage. Studying this; intent is to have a business and the nonprofit each have a financial investment.

Craig – Has been approached by a few corporations seeking meaningful volunteer work but has not initiated anything so far. Has an intern for ten weeks, hoping for progress.

David F– Others in LA are doing matching of corporate employees to nonprofits, so they have stayed away from it. (Taproot, Chamber, etc. all doing this.) Deepest involvement has been Wells Fargo as corporate sponsor of their ED Leadership Institute. Has a decent history of corporate financial support of their budget. Some good history with a company subsidizing their fees to serve a nonprofit in the company's interest area.

David P – Not much corporate presence in Albany; mixed history with General Electric. Some of their retiree clubs are supportive.

Ron – Engagement with Marathon for a number of years. Put on seminars for nonprofits, no cost to Marathon. Connected with Bayer through Pittsburgh, received a fee and some good volunteers. Some support from Shell, Exxon, etc. in the form of matching gifts for money or time. A number of corporate name sponsors.

Jan – Has not found much success with corporate involvement, other than welcoming individuals who happen to work there. Microsoft has not been a real success so far. Seems to be more time investment than results justify.

Julie – Has not seen as much corporate response as they'd like. Working on Microsoft, new to their area, might see the use of interns. Some workshops are funded by corporations and corporate foundations.

Paul – Primarily corporate support of operating budget.

Sue – Not yet involved in corporate engagement.

Tom – Has tried in the past but not had good response. Their board lacks relationships with corporations. Seeking corporate sponsors of projects.

Trudy – Have not had success yet. Board speed-dating offering employees the opportunity to join nonprofit boards. Working through Research Triangle Park Foundation. About to launch a Build a Better Board program that they hope will lead to employee engagement which might lead to financial support.

Yvonne – Corporate and staffing changes at Bayer have happened recently. Doing board training and matching. \$8500 to train a group of 20 employees, custom placement, able to attend programs for a year. NFP pays \$250. Skills-based volunteering has 20 people working with 5 nonprofits at a time. Operations, technology, areas in which ESC does not regularly consult. Those teams work three months, ESC member on each team as an adviser. On their 40th project; 6 cohorts. Companies pay \$12,500, nonprofits pay nothing. Trying a one-day version this summer. Having a lead corporate partner that helped create the center has been very important to them. They do have competition in training corporate volunteers but they feel their product is more in-depth.

Q and A:

David Factor: Knowing how to engage corporations is a common challenge. He is exploring a flash-challenge idea for one-day brainstorming sessions, with ESC using the results over a longer term. We need to figure out how to get the implementation through the nonprofits.

David P – What is flash challenge?

Yvonne – Alcoa requested a one-day format. Working with four nonprofits, asking them to come up with a challenge to be addressed. Group will spend five hours on this, with a nonprofit orientation at the beginning. Teams will have seen a synopsis of their nonprofit before they arrive. Nonprofits leave with a list of next steps. Colorado Springs has had some history on this. One takeaway is that corporate people are quite surprised at how things are in the nonprofit world.

Amber – Their version started out as one-day but corporations asked to go deeper, so now a three month engagement. Taproot and Common Impact are into this. Many online matching programs are out there also. We add quality control and experience.

Ron – Approach to corporation might be to HR rather than public affairs or corporate giving. (Based on what doing these projects does for their employees.)

Yvonne – Lead partner Covestro is launching this publicly. She will follow up with some materials.

Darlene – Think point of corporate need to connect with millennial employees is a very key point.

Yvonne – Companies are allowing open signups; more senior management has opted in, seems to benefit from cross-generational connections. Based on weekdays but followup is in off hours.

Julie – Was it hard to recruit nonprofits?

Yvonne – Finding the right match/level of project can be a challenge. Most are excited. Nonprofit client list has come mainly from corporate suggestions.

Craig – Volunteer base was formerly nearly all retirees; now less than half. Looking for ideas on how to recruit volunteers from the corporate world.

Julie – Also seeing non-retirees using them for their pro-bono work. Team connection, we do the prep work. 15-20%.

Craig – Wondering about flash challenge as an opportunity to meet his need.

David F – The more corporate contact we have, and the more we spread the word on our need for volunteers, the more we will find people coming up on retirement. Even saw it with a retiring foundation person!

Yvonne invited Paul to share some thoughts on this fall's National Meeting. Paul said that a flyer would be coming to them today and he is asking for a quick response. This will help build a valuable agenda for the meeting.