



Global Diaspora Week Launch Event October 9, 2015

Breakout Session: Finding Your Organizational North Star

Speaker: Krysta Sadowski, Accenture

Session Summary: Krysta went over the ways in which a philanthropic organization can create a strategic plan as well as why having a tailored focus is important.

1. **What is an organizational North Star?**
 - a. A “North Star” is an organization’s primary focus.
 - i. This should reflect your organization’s strengths
 - ii. It is also indication of what your org **does not** do
2. **Why is it important to have a North Star?**
 - a. It gives the organization a clear mission statement and vision
 - i. This should be consistent throughout the entire group, from the CEO to the newest volunteer
 - b. Having a clear vision is important for garnering funding and volunteers
 - c. Knowing your strengths and what you want to focus on keeps the organization from being stretched too thin and ensures an efficient use of resources
3. **How can organization create their North Star?**
 - a. **Purpose:** The first determination
 - i. **Deep vs. Broad:** will the group focus on doing one thing very well, or will it be spread across a number of sectors?
 - ii. **Function vs Topic:** Most organizations will have one or two functions and one or two topics, such as after-school programs (function) and literacy (topic)
 - b. **Vision:** What is the organization’s reason for existence? This should be a very short, succinct sentence or two.
 - i. What is your org’s vision for the future?
 - ii. You might lose people during this portion of the process if they disagree with the vision – this is better for the group so that everyone can focus on what they really want to do
 - c. **Mission:** Usually more fleshed out than vision



- i. Provides explanation of how you will create your vision for the future
- d. **Strategic Plan:** Priorities and benchmarks for the next 1-5 years
 - i. 3-5 goals with individual objectives, metrics, and timelines
 - ii. Note an operating plan can change according to circumstances

Discussion Questions:

1. How can you be inclusive in the strategic planning process without having the actual North Star become too diluted?
 - a. Include only directional members (board of directors or equivalent), but make sure you educate all members once the actual plan has been created. This might take longer than the initial planning process.