

Meals on Wheels Association of America - Annual Conference

September 1, 2010

Thriving in Turbulent Times: X Factors of Sustainability

Kevin D. Monroe





Goals for Today's Session

- ▶ Develop a framework for considering sustainability
- ▶ Encourage broad thinking (perhaps different) about your work and the benefits you deliver
- ▶ Examine X Factors of Sustainability
- ▶ Explore ways to leverage your X Factors to increase and enhance your sustainability
- ▶ Help you discover one or two ideas to enhance your sustainability



Context for our Discussions

- ▶ The turbulence of our times - *The Great Recession*
- ▶ MOW: one **mission** - many methods & models
- ▶ Member programs are very similar, but vastly different
- ▶ **Your** organization is a complex organism
- ▶ Sustainability planning - **One size fits one**
 - ▶ There's no single silver bullet or universal solution
 - ▶ There are principles that apply to most, if not all, but must be tailored to your organization and situation



Point to Ponder

“Leadership is needed more during times of uncertainty than in times of stability”

Jim Kouzes & Barry Posner in *The Leadership Challenge*



Point to Ponder

“Not much happens without a dream. And for something great to happen, there must be a great dream. Behind every great achievement is a dreamer of great dreams.”

Robert Greenleaf in *Servant Leadership*



Defining Sustainability

- ▶ Literal definition from Latin is 'to hold up'
- ▶ Capable of being sustained
- ▶ The capacity to endure
- ▶ The capacity to maintain a certain process or program over time
- ▶ The potential for long-term maintenance of wellbeing
- ▶ Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs



Defining Nonprofit Sustainability

- ▶ The continuation of community health or quality of benefits over time. (Center for Civic Partnerships)
- ▶ Maintaining and continuing program services after a funding period is over and ensuring that the organization has become a permanent part of community resources. (SAMHSA)
- ▶ The ability of an organization to develop strategies for continued growth and development that provide long-term impact of individuals and communities.
- ▶ Foundational elements that allow the organization to survive the tests of time and be resilient when confronted with various challenges.



The Community Perspective

"The organization makes such a unique contribution to the communities it touches and does its work with such unadulterated excellence that if it were to disappear, it would leave a hole that could not be easily filled by any other institution on the planet." -- Jim Collins



The Sustainability Challenge

Ensuring your organization and programs do NOT disappear!



Survival and Sustainability a philosophical distinction

Survival is about
existence,

Sustainability is
about impact

Survival is necessary,

Sustainability is optional

SURVIVAL

- ▶ Organization centered
- ▶ Keeping our doors open

SUSTAINABILITY

- ▶ Others' centered
- ▶ Keeping our community vibrant & strong



Sustainability Myths and Misconceptions

- ▶ Sustainability is only about money
- ▶ Sustainability planning is a one-time event
- ▶ We're too busy preparing and delivering meals to address our sustainability
- ▶ Sustainability planning requires a large staff
- ▶ Sustainability is only for large organizations
- ▶ Somebody else will address sustainability for us (MOWAA)





Thinking Broadly About Your Work

How you define the problem
determines how you
envison the solution



Thinking Broadly About Your Work

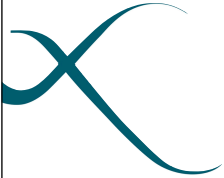
How you describe the solution
determines how others
perceive your work
and its value to the community





Thinking Broadly About Your Work

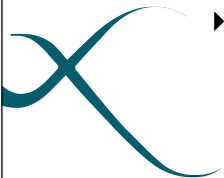
From one perspective
you fight food
insecurity,
but from another view
you enrich the quality
of life, enhance senior
health, and enable
independent living.



Marketing MOW Results (Outcomes)

Premise – You deliver so much more than meals

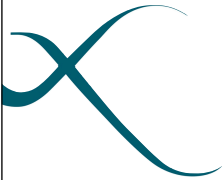
- ▶ Your mission is to end senior hunger, but in reality you...
 - ▶ Enhance the quality of life for seniors
 - ▶ Improve the nutritional health and wellbeing of seniors
 - ▶ Provide caring social contact for homebound Americans
 - ▶ Promote independent living, reduce the length of hospital stays, and delay or prevent institutionalization.
- ▶ Develop systems for documenting and quantifying your **outcomes**
- ▶ Marketing and communications are vehicles for sharing and leveraging your community impact (results)
 - ▶ Enliven statistical successes with personal stories





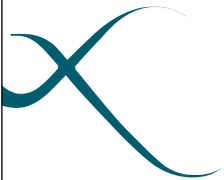
Thinking Outcomes and Impact

People **appreciate** the
work you do,
Community investors
value the **impact** you
provide



Thinking Outcomes and Impact

Your outputs are
important, but they are
not ultimate ends,
rather they are
intermediate steps to
the your ultimate end -
outcomes





Thinking Outcomes and Impact

Think, Talk, and Share
Impact - Individual &
Community



The Mysterious X Factor

- ▶ In mathematics an **x factor** is an unknown quantity which only becomes known after following a prescribed process.
- ▶ In the business world an **x factor** is a significant amount of personal charisma or that special quality that sets one candidate or company apart from the crowd.
- ▶ In the entertainment world it's that undefinable quantity which may promote one candidate over another in the judges' eyes. You can't define it, but you know it when you see it.
- ▶ In sports, **x factor** describes the adjustments a team uses to seize the next big opportunity or to stop the next big threat.



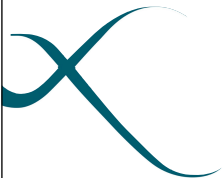
X Factors of Sustainability

Characteristics, qualities, and activities that, when combined, have a multiplicative effect for the organization causing the organization to rise above the crowd and stand out like a star and attract attention (and funding) from institutional and individual donors. X factors position your organization to seize the next big opportunity and/or survive the next big threat.



X Factors of Sustainability

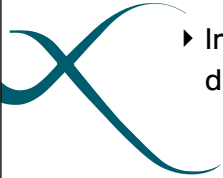
- ▶ People
- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Plan
- ▶ Passion
- ▶ Programs
- ▶ Performance
- ▶ Partners
- ▶ Prophetic Resilience





People

- ▶ First Who, Then What (Jim Collins)
 - ▶ “People are ***not*** your most important asset. The ***right*** people are.”
- ▶ Where is it important in your organization to have the right people?
 - ▶ Leadership - board and staff
 - ▶ Staff - paid and volunteer - “no unimportant positions”
- ▶ Determine what qualities and characteristics define ***the right people*** for your organization
- ▶ Identify all talent gaps
- ▶ Invest in the continued growth and development of your people



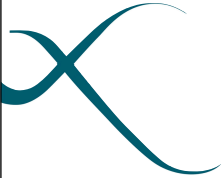
***“Relationships are
primary, all else is
derivative.”***

Dr. Ronald David
The Kellogg Foundation,
Community Voices



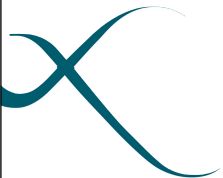
Purpose

- ▶ The big WHY of what you do
 - ▶ Collin's BHAG - Big Hairy Audacious Goals
 - ▶ end senior hunger by 2020
- ▶ The purpose (vision and mission) should be clear, concise, and compelling
- ▶ Staff **and** board must be actively connecting others with the purpose
- ▶ What are the real consequences to your community if you fail to fulfill your purpose?



Plan

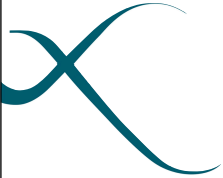
- ▶ Have strategic clarity about what you seek to accomplish
- ▶ Develop a plan that is compelling and credible
- ▶ Obtain board and staff support for the plan
- ▶ Develop and implement accountability measures to monitor plan performance





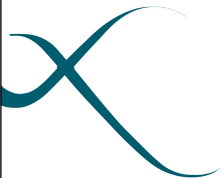
Passion

- ▶ Defined as “intense emotion compelling action”
- ▶ Contagious excitement about your mission
- ▶ Motivation that keeps you going when times are tough
- ▶ Passion must pervade all levels of the organization
 - ▶ Passion for the mission
 - ▶ Passion for people
 - ▶ Passion for the community
 - ▶ Passion for a better, brighter future



Programs

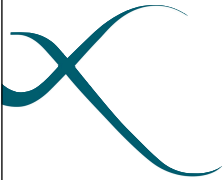
- ▶ Anchored to organization’s mission
- ▶ Birthed out of planning and understanding of need
- ▶ Meet documented community needs
- ▶ Proven effectiveness (evidence-based)
- ▶ Culturally appropriate
- ▶ Critically relevant





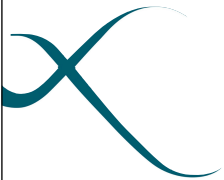
Performance

- ▶ Produce results that are measurable and meaningful - outcomes
- ▶ Positive community impact
- ▶ Proven track record of financial integrity
- ▶ Demonstrated history of cost-effectiveness and sound financial management



Partnerships

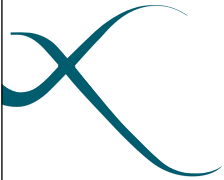
- ▶ Integrating into the community through a variety of cross-sector partnerships
 - ▶ Business, human services, faith, healthcare, etc.
- ▶ Connecting with other service providers
- ▶ Working for the greater good of the community
- ▶ Being a good collaborator





Prophetic Resilience

- ▶ Actively engaged with community leaders and influencers
- ▶ Studying trends and patterns
- ▶ Anticipating the future needs of your clients and community
- ▶ Being resilient with programs resources to meet the evolving needs
- ▶ “Skate to where the puck is going to be” - Wayne Gretzky



Assessing Your Progress

As we've discussed these points, I trust you were doing a mental assessment of your organization

- ▶ What are your areas of strength?
- ▶ Are there elements that need strengthening or critical gaps?
- ▶ How can you leverage your strengths to increase or enhance your organizational sustainability?
 - ▶ Relationships
 - ▶ Resources
 - ▶ Results
- ▶ How do you fill any current gaps to shore up your progress towards sustainability?

X Factors of Sustainability

AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHECK-UP

SATISFACTORY	NEEDS WORK	IN OUR ORGANIZATION...
_____	_____	Our senior leadership team consists of the right people with the right resources for their roles
_____	_____	Our Board is sufficiently diverse and fully staffed
_____	_____	All positions are staffed with competent and passionate people
_____	_____	All staff members clearly understand the vision and mission
_____	_____	Staff members are actively connecting others to the mission within the community
_____	_____	Board members are actively connecting people to the organization
_____	_____	Our community values the contributions of our organization to its health and well-being
_____	_____	Our strategic plan is up-to-date and guides our planning
_____	_____	We have operationalized <i>Ending Senior Hunger by 2020</i> for our community
_____	_____	We benefit from active community volunteerism
_____	_____	Our programs are recognized as culturally appropriate to our community
_____	_____	We document the outcomes of all programs
_____	_____	Program results/outcomes are regularly shared with the community
_____	_____	We have a proven track record of financial integrity
_____	_____	We actively collaborate with other key stakeholders in the community

AREAS FOR GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT	STRATEGIES AND/OR RESOURCES

X Factors of Sustainability

ACTION PLAN

KEY STRENGTHS	PRIMARY CHALLENGES
1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.

KEY ACTIONS REQUIRED FOR SUSTAINABILITY				
Areas for Growth and Development	Actions Required	People to be Involved	Tools and Resources Needed	Timeline



Parting Thoughts

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood...make big plans, aim high in hope and work.”

Daniel H. Burnham



Parting Thoughts

“A life built on noble purpose is a life well spent.”

William Damon



Subscribe to Our Free E-Newsletters



Marketing
matters



Sustainability
strategies



great grassroots
Governance

www.xfactorllc.com



www.xfactorllc.com