Friends of the Clifton Park-Halfmoon Library

STAYING FLEXIBLE - Friends Choose a New Leadership Model

Leadership Success with a Team

Quad Leadership Team
Michele Gorab, Wilma Jozwiak, Rhona Koretzky, and Sheila Morroni

Presenting:
Wilma, Rhona, and Sheila
How we were - CPHL Friends 2000

- Books for Babies
- Get Out the Vote
- Outreach
- Limited Proctors Ticket sales
- Travel
- Used Book Sales
- Basic website
- Basic email marketing
**CPhL Friends: 2015**

- Battle of the Books
- Books for Babies
- Extensive Proctors Ticket sales
- Get Out the Vote
- Outreach
- Travel
- Used Book Sales
- Increased Hospitality
- Two Towns – One Book community read
- Crossing Cultures events
- Junior Friends of the Library
- Interactive website
- Sophisticated use of email marketing
- Social media engagement
- Community scholarships

**What’s the same? Board Members still have complex lives...**
For the President, it was getting to be too much ...
Things We Had Tried . . .

• Instituted a two-year term limit to eliminate the dreaded “President for life” phenomenon

• Added Past President and President-Elect positions
  – Past President provided support for the first year of a President’s two-year term
  – President-Elect “shadowed” the President for the two years before rising to the role of President
  – This model was in effect for two terms
What we learned

**PRO** The Past President/President/President Elect model helps get people up to speed

**CON** The model did little to reduce the stress and burden of the Presidency:

- The need to “be present” for so many activities
- Being the sole primary “point” or contact person for so many different people
- Even with support from the Past President, being the one finally responsible for major issues
- Usually were only able to meet at Board mtgs so no real “shadowing”
When it all came to a head ...

- President Elect chose not to assume Presidency
- Current President was unable to continue
- No other Board member was prepared to assume Presidency
Exploring the Issues

The FOL Board decided to:

- Approach this as a Critical Moment (not crisis moment) and opportunity to:
  1. Examine what we were doing and why, and
  2. Determine its alignment with Library Mission (Library was undergoing long-range planning process)
- Become more proactive rather than reactive
- Seek professional facilitation for the process
Choosing Facilitator
Fruitfly Consulting

Consulting GOAL

- To help the FOL Board think about a longer-term vision for the organization through 2025
- To also visualize the Library in the future through 2025
- To understand what role FOL has in shaping the future Library
Two-session process and debrief

- Structured and focused
- Minimized distractions
- Productive exercises
- Visuals to assist thought processing

Good facilitation does not offer answers or solutions
Final Facilitation Session

Defining the Model – Throwing Caution to the Wind!

• Facilitation helped us determine that we were committed to what we were doing because it aligned with our Mission and Vision

• We realized that we had to change or risk losing FOL

• Co-Presidency still left a lot on each plate

• Let’s get crazy – let’s have a presidential team!
We didn’t know much yet, but we knew we needed...

- To treat the model as an experiment or pilot
- To be flexible in pilot year & moving forward
- Our other Board colleagues to also be flexible
- To report back to the Board on the model
- The Board to give us feedback
Benefits of a President Team

- More minds tuned to FOL programs and issues
- Pre-Board meetings, as needed, to hash over important issues (decreased over time)
- More people learning about more aspects of the FOL
- More fertile discussions about what the FOL is doing and where it is going
Changes So Far

• Original responsibility areas of the “Quads”
  – Some areas ended up fitting better under a different person due to interest and expertise
  – Some areas ended up being more or less demanding - not intended as 4 equal roles
  – Flexibility and willingness important takeaways

• Personnel changes
  – One Quad stepped down and Michele Gorab is now a Quad – having 4 feels right for us.
Other Changes Post-Facilitation

• Simplifying - Yearly Volunteer Thank You Event discontinued due to low attendance
• Purchased a banner recognizing volunteers for display at the Library in lieu of event
• FOL Board members now attend Board of Trustee monthly meetings to better understand how the FOL may align with or assist in their work
• Ongoing engagement with Library staff regarding its long-range plan results to be proactive to their ideas and needs
If you’re interested in a Team Leadership Model ...

- The importance of an exploratory process
- The value of a neutral facilitator
- The critical role of flexibility on EVERYONE’S part
- The value of a “pilot” approach
- The absolute necessity of open and cordial communication
- Find the “number” that works for you
Want more information?

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