

THE CHALLENGE: CULTIVATING MEMBER SUPPORT



Every organization is a vehicle for people to enjoy, grow and improve their lives. It can be successful only with the whole-hearted support of its members and potential members. That support must be cultivated, nurtured and promoted. Simply knowing their names is not enough. The leadership of the organization needs to be aware of the strengths and challenges of its members, capture that information, and be able to access it. *Strengths are the components that make us who we are.*

Find a convenient way to capture and “mine” (access) the data, whether it’s via a survey, spreadsheet, interview, or some other method. Being able to identify and contact people with the strengths needed to accomplish tasks within the group goals is the foundation of a strong organization. It allows the development of deeper connections within the members and rotates the selection of qualified people to staff programs and projects. If your organization is large, divide data-gathering responsibilities among a leadership team and arrange to share the information.

A New Way to Look at Strengths

- **Skills:** learnable, practical abilities, *e.g., news writer, a computer whiz, sign painter.*
- **Talents:** natural aptitudes or passions of the individual, *e.g., DJ, poet, “people person,” actor, gifted artist.*
- **Resources:** tangible things they have or have access to, *e.g., they have a pool, a meeting space, or a large garage.*

- **Experiences:** include training, education, or personal experience in doing something, *e.g., they are trained as peer counselors, they have designed websites, written essays, built furniture.*
- **Networks:** formally recognized state, regional, or national organizations. Look for connections that can help them help you move your organization forward.
- **Groups:** informal groupings of people, cliques, gatherings, or social circles.
- **Tools:** literally the physical possession of tools, *e.g., hand tools, power tools, truck, van.*
- **Hobbies:** passions and interests, *e.g., photographers enhance your publicity and marketing committees, actors bring a new dimension to those presentations.*
- **Social Media:** What do they use? How often? How do we reach them there? What kind of device are they using for it? How many followers?

A CHECKLIST FOR CULTIVATING MEMBER SUPPORT



- Skills** (learnable, practical skills)
- Talents** (skills that come naturally)
- Resources** (tangible things and contacts)
- Experiences** (training, education, or personal experiences)
- Networks** (formal organizations and social media)
- Groups** (informal groupings of people/cliques)
- Tools** (tangible possession of tools)
- Hobbies** (passions and interests)
- Social Media** (what they use, how often, how many followers, what kind of device?)

