

BRINGING TOGETHER A NON-PROFIT

Case Study 104

The Situation

The **mission of this nonprofit group is to offer a helping hand to the homeless**, including feeding, clothing, housing and counseling the adults and caring for their children while they work. In other words, help struggling people get back on their feet. The group is in partnership with churches, synagogues and other congregations, who provide many of the facilities and services. But this wonderful cause wasn't working very well.

The organization was 18 months old and **having trouble getting off the ground**. Board members had joined for varying reasons and the board was disjointed and unfocused. Not all of the board had joined to get to work.

The Work of Best Year Yet

After an initial interview to discover their needs, we brought the board together to make a Best Year Yet plan. It was obvious that although it was a worthy cause, they **needed to come together to align on why they were doing it** and what needed to be done to make it happen. We needed to work with them to get them motivated and focused on what they wanted to achieve.

The planning session **gave each member a chance to voice his or her sense of mission** and expectations and allowed the group to come to a consensus. They identified clear guidelines for their success:

- Communicate, communicate, communicate
- Expand outreach and collaboration
- Work as a team and play your positions

We helped them to discover that **their most pressing need was tighter organization and clearer, more focused direction**. Although more outreach and much money were required, the major role was to be Governance. How could they lead a loose collection of congregations, donors and volunteers to grow this cause without a crystal clear set of procedures, rules and expectations of their own?

The Results

In their first quarter this board has **raised more money than ever before**, recruited three high-powered board members, created a complete set of marketing materials with a powerful message, more than tripled their outreach data base, and increased the number of host congregations by 25%.

More importantly, **each board and staff member is motivated and committed**. They are following their lessons and living their vision. They are proud to have emerged from their rut of disjointed and misguided efforts. Their enthusiasm bubbles and their passion is contagious. Now, instead of dragging themselves to the monthly board meetings and spending two frustrating hours together, they're enthusiastic about what they are doing and doing it well.

This year they plan to have nearly four times as many homeless families move off the streets and into happier, safer, more productive futures – and they're well on the way!