

Dynamic Impact Reporting

February 2010



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A service of the Corporation for National and Community Service - Special Projects and Sustainability Initiative

Dear “Dynamic Impact” Colleague,

The best way to build community trust and respect for your program is to demonstrate impact. In addition to the importance of measuring your program’s effectiveness, this month’s On-The-Go eTA highlights ways to creatively disseminate program impact information to the community. Click on the titles on the right to learn more about:

**Measuring Impact – by Sandra Miller,
VISTA Leader guest writer**

**Turning Annual Reports into Impact
Reports**

**Demonstrating Impact at Your Annual
Meetings**

On-The-Go eTA is now interactive!

- *POST A COMMENT* and respond to others’ queries
- *SEARCH* topics of interest from back issues

If you wish to receive expert assistance for help with your questions, you can still contact Campaign Consultation, Inc. at OnTheGo@CampaignConsultation.com.

TOP ▲

Measuring Impact: by Sandra Miller, VISTA Leader guest writer

Sandra Miller is a VISTA Leader for the Volunteer Centers of Michigan (VCM.) Evaluation has been a part of the VISTA training and also the work that she does with the VCM VISTAs, Volunteer Centers, and nonprofits in general across the state. In the article below Miller shares her thoughts about measuring program impact for her volunteer initiative:

VCM VISTAs are asked to work with partnering

IN THIS ISSUE:

click on titles below to read full articles

[Measuring Impact: by Sandra Miller, VISTA Leader guest writer](#)

[Turning Annual Reports into Impact Reports](#)

[Demonstrating Impact at Your Annual Meetings](#)

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TIPS FOR THE TIMES

Collect narrative stories throughout the year, and you will have a file of material about the impact of your programs on the people you serve.

**Visit the VISTA
Campus for more
information**

VCM VISTAs are asked to work with partnering organizations to develop instruments that will collect both quantitative and qualitative data. In particular at VCM, data collection is done regarding volunteers. Quantitative data deals with numbers and units that can be measured. An example of quantitative data would be number of volunteer hours served. Quantitative data, however, does not by itself reveal actual community impact achieved by those volunteers.

Quantitative data, either online or in paper form, is frequently collected as a part of the volunteer registration process. Quantitative data also will be collected to measure the outcomes of a program or event. For example, information will be captured regarding the number of food baskets, hours of clean-up completed, tons of products recycled, number of students mentored, etc. The information can be reported as an aggregate, converted to a dollar value, or expressed as a full-time-staff-equivalent (FTE).

The second type of data—qualitative data—is used to measure the impact of a program in terms of satisfaction levels, improvement in lifestyle, increased community stability, etc. Surveys, questionnaires, interviews, stories of success from both the volunteer and client point of view are all important means of collecting qualitative data. Volunteer satisfaction surveys provide some qualitative data.

Although qualitative data requires more time and effort to collect, when paired with quantitative data, it can more accurately present the desired program impact. In addition, qualitative data tends to have a more emotional appeal when presented to potential donors and volunteers.

The time necessary to develop and implement a comprehensive program evaluation is often an obstacle for VISTAs and organizations. In order to ensure inclusion and consistency, evaluation methodology needs to be planned at the beginning of the program inception. Nonprofits that implement effective evaluation programs report that the time spent “up front” in the process eventually saves time in the end. More volunteers are recruited and retained, more funds are generated, and programming is more clearly communicated.

(To communicate with Sandra Miller directly, you can reach her at vcmvista@mivolunteers.org Sandra Miller also contributes to a blog for the Michigan Nonprofit Association. To learn more about other recommended practices go to the Michigan Nonprofit Association Website—www.MNAonline.org/effect.asp and access the “Principles & Practices Guide for Nonprofit Excellence in Michigan.”)

TOP ▲

- [VISTA Viewfinder](#)
See the latest issue
- **Featured eGIZMO** (Giving Information for Zooming Mission Objective: [Producing Proposals That Work](#). This interactive GIZMO is designed to help you view the perspective of a harried foundation executive. The goal is to help you develop a proposal that stands out from hundreds of competing proposals that land on foundation leaders' desks each month, and one that can help you meet your program's fundraising goals.
- **Social Media Monday Webshop:** January 25th 3pm EST. Flickr: Capacity building through photo sharing. Simply [click here](#) to register today:
- **VISTAworks**--a comprehensive interactive learning tool that helps VISTAs figure out their next steps after service. [Click here](#) to view it

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Turning Annual Reports into Impact Reports

Often organizations publish annual reports that show only a record of past years' activities and financial statements. For more ROI when producing an annual report, turn your annual report into an impact report. An impact report details your accomplishments and the economic, environmental, social results and the payoff to society.

Here are some ideas to turn your annual report into an impact report:

Focus on progress being made to resolve root problems.

More than what you did, readers want to know why you did it. What were the results? Why did you spend your time and their money the way you did? What difference did it make? People are busy...don't assume that readers will automatically understand how your activities help you achieve your mission. Connect the dots for them.

Include personal profiles.

Use personal stories of your clients and supporters to illustrate the positive impact being achieved. Explain what you have accomplished overall, then humanize your statistics with some personal profiles. Highlight how your work helped a specific individual. Share a volunteer's story of how they made a positive difference.

[Click here](#) to get more ideas for how to turn an annual report into an impact report.

TOP ▲

Demonstrating Impact at Your Annual Meetings

Your annual meeting can be turned into a marketing opportunity for showcasing the impact of your programs and services. Use the ideas below to make your annual meeting a special event that convinces guests about the impact on community and in turn, your program's value.

- Determine what type of event will work best with your budget and goals. It may include a special exhibit, a respected guest speaker, awards, the presentation of plans for the future, a reception, etc.
- Set your annual meeting date, time, and place to attract the greatest number of stakeholders. Be certain to include invitations to media, funders, community leaders, and others whom you want to tell about your work.

[The Chronicle of Philanthropy](#)

[Workshops/ Clinics](#)

[Online Courses/ Webinars](#)

[Web Wizard](#)

[The 5Cs](#)

[VISTA Viewfinder](#)

"Use those annual report and annual meetings because... "News, if unreported, has no impact. It might as well have not happened at all.."

– Gaye Talese. (b. 1932) American author and journalist. .

- Pull together a team to help with planning, publicity, arrangements, etc. Give each team a written list of responsibilities and deadlines.
- Display posters or simple exhibits for each program, or show a few slides highlighting the year's work with an accompanying taped narrative story. Have staff available to answer questions. Prepare packets with promotional and education materials.

[Click here](#) for further ideas on how to use your annual meeting to demonstrate impact.

POST A COMMENT: Share other creative ways that you've disseminated the data to demonstrate accountability and impact to your stakeholders. [Click here](#) to make a comment and read what others have to say.

TOP ▲

Turning Annual Reports into Impact Report (cont)

Include photos.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Many of the people reading your annual report won't actually read it, but they will be attracted to the pictures. Show them before and after photos and people in action.

Once you've got them looking at the photos, tell a story with your captions. Use captions to provide pertinent, valuable information. For example, write captions for photos of VIPs so readers do not miss the significance of their support. Connect the photo to an accomplishment. If people read nothing but the captions in your annual report, they should still get a sense for the good work you did last year.

Graphically illustrate your financials.

Financial statements and balance sheets should be included, but donors' respect and trust will be more immediate if they can scan creative visuals beyond overused pie charts that show where the money comes from and where it goes. Focus on visual depiction regarding your main fundraising strategies, the outcomes and their impact. Don't forget to include coverage of any cost-savings measures you implemented this year.

Tell donors how they can help.

Once you've inspired readers with the good works in your annual report, close by telling them how they can help you do more. How can they support you with their money or time? Do you offer planned giving options, for example? Will you accept gifts of stock? Can they use a

credit card? What will their gifts provide? Be clear about the best ways to help.

Distribute it widely.

Design your annual report for online use and put it up on your website. Include a sign-up section, and encourage readers to forward it to their friends.

Use it as a lead-in to your annual meeting and have a 10 minute discussion.

One way to think about the annual report is as a brochure disguised as an annual report: who should see this particular brochure, and what responses are you trying to evoke from them?

After the initial setup, the cost for increased printed quantities is minimal because you are paying only for the additional paper and press time. When you calculate the quantity to be printed, include copies for your dignitaries and benefactors with extras for potential investors, partners, donors and customers you may encounter during the upcoming year. Increase your quantity if you have planned a special event for the coming year.

When you need to make an impact at meetings to request funding or at visits with community officials, include a copy in the information package. Send it to potential donors and grant makers, as it summarizes your nonprofit's experience and track record. For some key funders or stakeholders, it may be desirable to send the report with an accompanying letter highlighting their particular interests.

Click on the links below to take a look at recent annual reports from national service organizations.

Economic Development Corporation of Fresno County
<http://www.fresnoedc.com/about/publications/Annual2009/flash.html#/1/>

Nevada Outdoor School
http://nevadaoutdoorschool.org/Administration/AnnualReports/2009_Annual_Report_W.pdf

Oregon Child Development Coalition
<http://www.ocdc.net/Live/content/downloads/annualrpt08.pdf>

Demonstrating Impact at Your Annual Meetings (cont.)

- Schedule speakers, videos and other aids needed to produce an interesting, educational, and entertaining program.
- Arrange for volunteer or staff greeters to welcome members as they arrive, hand out annual reports,

and direct visitors to displays.

- Introduce innovative ways to make presentations. Committee members might coordinate brief presentations – this lets several people take part in a leadership role.
- Provide a benefit. Present awards and provide recognition to charter members, board members, and employees. Recognize any new select employee or volunteer groups you have added during the past year.
- Write thank you's to speakers and annual meeting committee members.
- Prepare follow-up articles for your local newspaper, newsletters, and web site.
- Get feedback from staff and attendees. Evaluations will be helpful for planning your next event.

TOP ▲

NEXT MONTH: Our March issue of On-The-Go eTA will focus on increasing your personal visibility in the community.

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Resources

eOrganizer

eOrganizer is an interactive clearinghouse for the latest and greatest web instruments of change. This GIZMO shows you how to maximize free and inexpensive online tools and resources to mobilize people around issues and within organizations. Structured around eight categories important to community organizing, it offers descriptions and provides access to many of the most current web arenas and strategies for bringing groups together to create community change.

<http://www.campaignconsultation.com/GIZMOs/eorganizer/index.html>

The National ASK (Awareness, Skills, Knowledge) to Sustain Institute, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 1998, 2002.

The CNCS Resources Now! National Institute, sponsored by Corporation for National and Community Service, provided by Campaign Consultation, Inc. 2005-07.

TOP ▲

Learning Products and Services

Sustainability:

OntheGo@CampaignConsultation.com is designed to give information fast on building capacity. Use this online support for advice from a fundraising professional. Contact OntheGo@CampaignConsultation.com

VISTA Campus:

VISTA Campus is an online learning environment for the VISTA community. The aim is to support you in your development throughout and beyond your VISTA service. The Campus includes self-paced tutorials and courses, reference materials, discussions boards, a campus bookstore and more to help improve your skills and connect with other VISTAs. To access the site, go to <http://vistacampus.org> and select the "VISTAs" option. You can enter the site as a guest or create an account to access the content and discussion boards.

GIZMOs:

(Giving Information for Zooming Mission Objectives) GIZMOS are interactive. They are online capacity building products featuring a myriad of topics such as e-Organizer, Producing Proposals That Work, Building Your Case for Support, Business World Travel Kit, etc. View and use GIZMOs at www.CampaignConsultation.com/gizmosplash

The Chronicle of Philanthropy:

You are encourage to subscribe to The Chronicle for the latest news in the social profit industry. [Click here](#) for more information.

Workshops/Clinics:

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), through its T/TA service provider Campaign Consultation, Inc., offers a three-hour workshops and clinics for those interested.

WebWizard:

CNCS sponsors interactive website self-assessment service to assist programs and projects in maximizing their websites for sustainability needs. Simply [click here](#) now.

Online Courses/Webinars:

Web course delivery of topics pertinent to resource development such as — **Build Fundraising Volunteer Champions** and **Cause Related Marketing and Corporate Partnerships**. Available through the Resource Center at <http://www.nationalserviceresources.org>

TOP ▲

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[December 2009 Special Events](#)

[November 2009 Special Events](#)

[October 2009 Special Events](#)

[Mid-September 2009 Planning](#)

[September 2009 Presenting Change](#)

[August 2009 Asking](#)

[July 2009 Meaningful Service](#)

[Mid-June 2009 Partnerships and Collaboration](#)

[June 2009 Writing Foundation Proposals](#)

[Mid-May 2009 Graphic Design on a Dime](#)

[May 2009 Searching for Volunteer Leadership Stars](#)

[Mid-April 2009 Laying Out the Welcome Mat for Your Community](#)

[April 2009 Preparing for Civic Participation](#)

[Mid-March 2009 Saving Time](#)

[March 2009 The Power of Small Gifts](#)

[Mid-February 2009 Working with Businesses During a Downturn](#)

[February 2009 Growing Relationships](#)

[January 2009 Thank You Notes](#)

[2008 Archives](#)

[2007 Archives](#)

[2006 Archives](#)

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TOP ▲