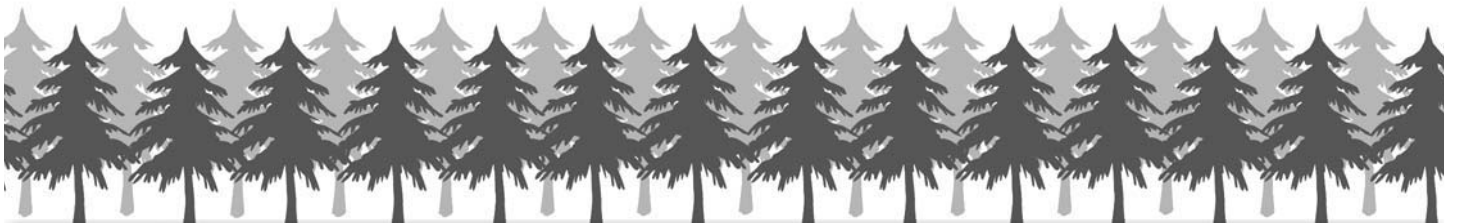

3. Staff and Personnel



3. Staff and Personnel

Introduction

In the previous chapter, we mentioned boards, senior staff, and volunteers in general terms. Now it is time to look more closely at the various roles of staff and their key functions, how they are hired and supervised and how their work connects to communities. While each role is separate and requires a different set of skills, it is important to keep staff working as a team and communicating well with each other. The left and right hand need to know what they are doing so that communities do not get confused or hear mixed messages.

Here are some common key roles and what they do:

| | |
|--|--|
| Recreation or Executive Director: | is the head of the organization, is responsible for implementing the strategic plan, for hiring and managing staff, for the management of budgets and programs, and for public and sector relationships. |
| Recreation Coordinator/Youth Worker: | is often the key person responsible for programs and services and works directly with groups and other organizations such as schools, justice, friendship centre, health workers, RCMP and senior/Elder groups. They promote and implement the programs. |
| Northern Community and School Recreation Coordinator: | usually work in schools after hours, on weekends and facilitates community-based activities in conjunction with school or community events. |
| Administration or Support Staff: | these are the people who answer the phone, sort the mail, coordinate schedules, do the filing, organize meetings and keep everything on track. Often their role includes basic bookkeeping and public relations. |

Each role is normally described in a job description (and occasionally a work plan) that is used to help anyone being hired to know what is expected from them and to help make the match between what the organization needs and what skills and interests the person applying has.

Grant Writing – Fundraising

While these functions are normally filled by the recreation director or senior staff person (and sometimes the board itself) it is not a role unto itself. It is, however, an important aspect for the organization and should be mentioned. When it is done by a special contract, (often a luxury item) the person or people are in charge of seeking out and applying for grants and/or for fundraising for various events or to augment the general budget.

The approach used for fundraising (beyond grants) could be everything from donations to raffles to serious capital campaigns (i.e. for community facilities) and is often guided by a fundraising strategy. Fundraising can be done by independent professionals (hired to do it) or by a committee (often attached to the board of directors) or it can include all staff and volunteers (who agree to undertake a specific fundraising event). Regardless of the approach used, grant writing, tracking and reporting and fundraising are key elements of financial sustainability and ultimately have to be someone's role

Hiring, Training, and Managing Staff

Every organization has a different way of approaching the hiring, training and management of staff. Some are more casual than others, and often times in the north it is difficult to find people who have both the skills required for the job and a solid familiarity and a passion for both the work and the north. Training then becomes of major importance. A training plan and budget to undertake professional development are important items and yet are sometimes not available or not seen as a priority. A well trained staff is much more confident about the jobs they are doing and much easier to manage.

How an organization functions and treats the people who work there is called the “Corporate or Organizational Culture” – the real way things are done. One of the most common complaints is that the recreation staff are not supported or “backed” by their supervisor/employer. Quality in the workplace involves making the effort and spending the money it takes to be culturally and geographically relevant and to make an effort to have a healthy and happy workplace. What goes on in the office is usually reflected in our relationships outside the office, so the healthier the organization, the more integrity and credibility it has with others.

A good manager in sport, culture and recreation must work with staff as a team but when necessary can work with different individuals doing different tasks. It is important that everyone understand the differences in the roles and not try to make everyone the same. Some staff will be in the office with fixed hours, and others may be out in communities working at night and on weekends. Equality in treatment – being fair – does not mean that everyone does the same thing or has the same level of responsibility or freedom – all roles are important but different and should not be compared.

“I wanted to be an employee of the Northern Lights School Division. I like to work in the school and the benefits are good and important to me.” – Teddy Hood, Community & School Recreation Coordinator, Beauval

Skills and Knowledge

There are some core competencies (basic skills and knowledge) that anyone working with sport, culture and recreation should have. This includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Introduction to Sport, Culture, and Recreation (definitions, principles, history, current best practice).
2. Community Involvement in Recreation – direct training for workers in the sector (community recreation).
3. Communication Basics – how to get the word out – promote activities – social messaging – providing information and hosting gatherings – tools, techniques and approaches for the use of multi-media – how to do a presentation – prepare a media notice – report writing – phone etiquette.
4. Programs and Services Practical Application – how to develop and implement a program or service – the tools and techniques for community participation (assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, project coordination, facilitation).
5. Understanding Community Structures – roles, relationships, who the silent leaders are, how communities work (culture, language, values and recreation practices) – Chief and Council and other leaders – what they do and how they do it.
6. Roles and Relationships – partnerships and other community and sector support – working in collaboration toward common goals.
7. Organizational Skills – being able to coordinate and keep track of what is going on, who is doing what and where things are kept.
8. Financial Planning – basic skills to develop and manage a budget and to implement good bookkeeping processes and tracking of receipts, invoices, payments and bank deposits.
9. Writing – the ability to communicate in writing in order to make reports, write letters and e-mails and to apply for grants or funding.
10. Evaluation – establishing an evaluation framework – how to set benchmarks, measure progress, identify outcomes and use results – data collection and advocacy (linked to celebration and promotion).

Work Plans and Performance Appraisals

Work plans are a very useful tool to help individual staff members sort out what they are doing to reach the goals of the organization and to plan their year ahead of time. Training needs are often identified in work plans so employees feel comfortable and able to do their job/work. If, for example, the work plan calls for presentations to community groups and the employee does not know how to do them, it becomes a training need. Work plans help the organization assess the performance of any given individual or team because they outline what is hoped for, what is planned and they show the connection between what is being done and the strategic goals set out by the board of directors.

Performance appraisals should take place at least once a year with the senior person reviewing all other staff and the board of directors (often through a human resource committee) reviewing the performance of the most senior person in the organization. Because many recreation employees in the north lack post-secondary training in the sport, culture, and recreation sector, the opportunity to meet and give feedback should be provided more often than not.

Having a clear and consistent process – one that is interactive (meaning that both sides have a say in what happened – what was a highlight – and what could have been improved) – will make for a more holistic approach to employment. If, however, there is an issue that occurs during the year, it should be addressed right away and not wait for the annual review. Equally important is celebrating successes and encouraging all staff to do the best they can and recognizing small and large contributions when someone has gone the extra mile. The difference between a good organization to work for and a poor one is how employees are treated and how much they feel they are recognized and valued.

Working With Others

Good community programming relies on having effective working relationships with and between all sectors. These relationships need to occur at a senior level (big picture policy and funding direction) but most importantly at the community level. There are many people involved in helping communities and individuals be the best they can be. Health and education are two essential sectors for sport, culture, and recreation to work with.

Mandates are similar but budgets are usually separate, so working together in a way that benefits our communities is the responsibility of those in paid jobs. Sometimes a partnership or more formal agreement is required for specific events or initiatives.

It is important to dedicate time to build and maintain relationships and to keep ideas flowing. Many of the things we are trying to do (reduce poverty, improve education and health, prevent suicide, etc.) require collaboration – so it is not just a good thing to do it is essential – and sport, culture and recreation plays a key role in all of it.



The Northern Context

It's all about balance and working in healthy work places with people who respect each other and enjoy their jobs. There is a shortage of well trained professionals in the north, so we want to encourage youth to pick careers in this important sector and to stay in the north to replace others when jobs are open. Northerners in northern jobs – being good role models, is what we are aiming for.

We are really proud of our sport, culture and recreation staff. They are seen as a very important part of our community wellness and, in most cases, they are appreciated for all that they do.

3. Staff and Personnel

What's Important to Know?

- ★ Staff roles are all different and each needs a job description linked to the organization's goals and approved priorities.
- ★ Clear communication (both internal and external) is critical to success.
- ★ There is a wide range of skills needed in most organizations – some are generic or core competencies and others are more specialized or specific.
- ★ Hire the best person possible and then train in areas that they are weak.
- ★ Prepare work plans a year in advance and use them for performance appraisals.
- ★ A workplace is only as healthy as the people who work there.

Tips and Advice

1. Hire a skilled manager or recreation director and let them do their job.
2. Set aside a budget for staff training and professional development.
3. Use open two-way approaches for performance appraisals.
4. Staff meetings should allow for open discussion (not just a fixed agenda).
5. Encourage managers and staff to share their news, successes, and frustrations.
6. Hold regular and surprise staff recognition events – bring or buy a cake often.
7. Stop the habit of gossiping and bad mouthing as soon as it starts.



Story

The La Ronge Parks & Recreation Director is hired by Town Council and supervised by the Town Administrator. There is a full-time Lead Hand in the Parks & Recreation Department who is supervised by the Parks & Recreation Director. There are three full-time Parks & Recreation workers I staff, supervised by both the Lead Hand and the Recreation Director. Summer Students are hired in the summer if grants are received to hire them. This staff structure works for them as their focus is on managing their community's facilities.

"We know we need a Recreation Director and would like to have one, but until we can find a grant or funding, we are going to have to stick with what we have." – Deschambault Lake Councillor

"There has been a lot of turnover with Recreation Directors in Sandy Bay often because of burnout. I will work with and support community partners so that we are all happy in our jobs and doing our best for the community through sport, culture and recreation." – Eric McCallum, Recreation Director, Sandy Bay

Toolbox Connection

In the toolbox you will find the following tools related to this section:

- Manager's Skills and Knowledge
- Recreation Director's Roles
- Work Plan Template Sample
- Performance Appraisal Template Sample
- Job Description – Recreation Coordinator
- Organizational Tips
- Time Management Tips
- Orientation Process Checklist