

perspectives a newsletter for the clients and friends of TCC Group

CCAT Helps Organizations Realize Capacity

When Skip Pahl, Executive Director of the Oceanside Museum of Art in Oceanside, California, received the opportunity for coaching and access to the TCC Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT) last year from The James Irvine Foundation, he jumped at the chance to better understand his nonprofit organization.

"Everyone in our organization who took part said it was very interesting and caused them to look at the museum in a way they hadn't thought of before," he said of the CCAT. "We met with our coach, who explained the tool and it gave us a terrific framework in which to reexamine the museum. We knew we had shortfalls in operations, but it really clarified some problems that we had felt before, but had never actually put our finger on."



The museum's organizational assessment informed the development of a capacity-building plan and, soon after, the Irvine Foundation awarded a \$350,000 grant so that the museum could implement the plan.

The result of a multi-year development process by TCC Group, the CCAT is an online questionnaire that assesses a nonprofit based on four organizational capacities: adaptive, leadership, management and technical. It also assesses organizational culture.

The 146-question tool generates a list of strengths, challenges and recommendations for the organization, based on replies from staff and board. It will also provide a capacity-building plan that prioritizes a set of next

steps an organization can implement on its own and/or with outside help to make the greatest improvement.

Although the tool has been used for the past 18 months by hundreds of nonprofit groups, the CCAT will be officially launched to the public on the TCC website in late spring 2007.

"We have found that this tool has been an invaluable resource for numerous nonprofits and funders," said Peter York, TCC's Director of Evaluation, who led the creation of the CCAT. "It allows nonprofits to truly quantify their organizational capacities in the four core areas and to have a better understanding of areas that need improvement."

**Skip Pahl, Executive Director
Oceanside Museum of Art**

The tool is based on years of fieldwork and multiple publications by TCC consultants, including a seminal national study of the capacity-building field, funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

For the Oceanside Museum, which was about to enter a major expansion of its facility and programs, the CCAT helped the organization rethink its strategy for growth.

"We went into the process of expansion by determining the cost of the new facility and the staff needed to begin the new programs. We thought we needed help with staffing levels," Pahl said. "But as we started to get into the ratings and where we had our different

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capacities and where we had shortfalls, we began to refocus, and our first priority was to begin a long-term plan, enlarge our audience to build a broader audience with more diversity, and begin working on more long-range stability."

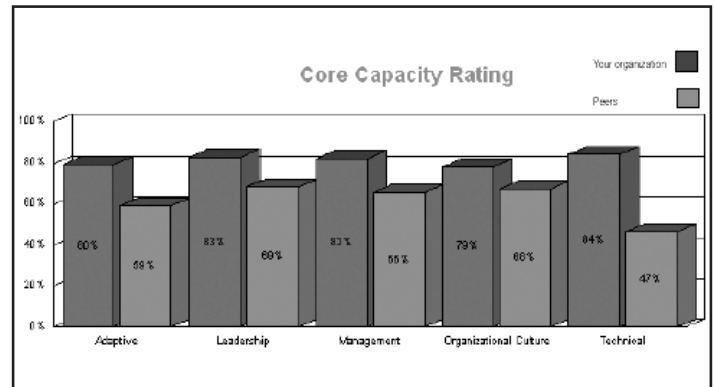
Unlike other assessment tools, the CCAT is entirely online. It is administered to organizational leaders such as the Executive Director, Program Director and board members. These individuals fill out the instrument independently and anonymously in order to provide the most accurate assessment of many key organizational functions. Findings reflect an aggregation of what leaders perceive to be the organization's strength and weakness areas within each of the four core capacities, as well as organizational culture.

Once all of the registered users have completed the tool, a final report on the organization's core capacities, complete with graphic depictions and recommendations for change, is generated and forwarded to the organization.

Madeline Janis, Executive Director of the social justice organization, Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE), asked that select members of her staff and board take the CCAT in 2006.

Now in 2007, the entire staff and as many board members as possible are taking the survey as part of a larger conversation about management training. "We thought it would be an even better investment if everyone participates and you have everyone thinking about the same questions at the same time," Janis said.

In New York at the Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), a large AIDS service organization, the CCAT's role in man-



Sample CCAT report with overview of the four core capacities and information on organizational culture. Although each capacity is also addressed in more detail in the complete report, this chart provides nonprofits with a clear overview of their capacities and a comparison to peer organizations.

agement was equally vital, but somewhat different. The nonprofit recently changed its management structure and for newly-appointed COO Robert Bank, the CCAT results were crucial in helping to shape departmental changes.

"It's important for people like us to step back and think because we're always so busy doing," he said. "The CCAT gives you the opportunity to listen to what's going on around you, to analyze the data, and to make strategic short and long-term decisions based on that data. You have a responsibility as a nonprofit manager to do this."

Additional information about the CCAT, including a sample final report and answers to frequently asked questions, is also available online at www.tccgrp.com/CCAT.html or by contacting the CCAT Sales & Support Desk toll-free at 1-866-470-2258 or via email at CCAT@tccgrp.com.

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