



Future Leadership Growth at Marin Ventures

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NPA 684



Leadership development is a crucial factor in employee retention and organizational strength. When we say “leadership development” we mean the identification and development of those individuals who will lead the critical functions of your organization and who, in partnership with other leaders, will be responsible for its overall health and impact. (Bridgespan, 2013)

Marin Ventures is a small nonprofit organization in San Rafael, California. The organization serves adults with developmental disabilities. The Executive Director, Jami Davis, desires to grow her staff into leadership positions, specifically hoping to create a succession plan for the executive director position. The project is intended to assess the current staff development practices of the organization with suggestions for growth and expansion.

The objectives of this project are to determine tools necessary for Marin Ventures to begin assessing their current leadership development program needs. Questions adapted from Blue Avocado, an online magazine for nonprofits.

What kind of leaders will Marin Ventures need to succeed in the future?

Who has potential to fill those positions?

What does that imply about designing processes to develop those leaders internally?

What on-the-job experiences can Marin Ventures provide so that their staff develop the skills and connections they'll need to be leaders?

Research began with interviewing the Executive Director, Jami Davis, and her Program Director, Peter Konicek of Marin Ventures.

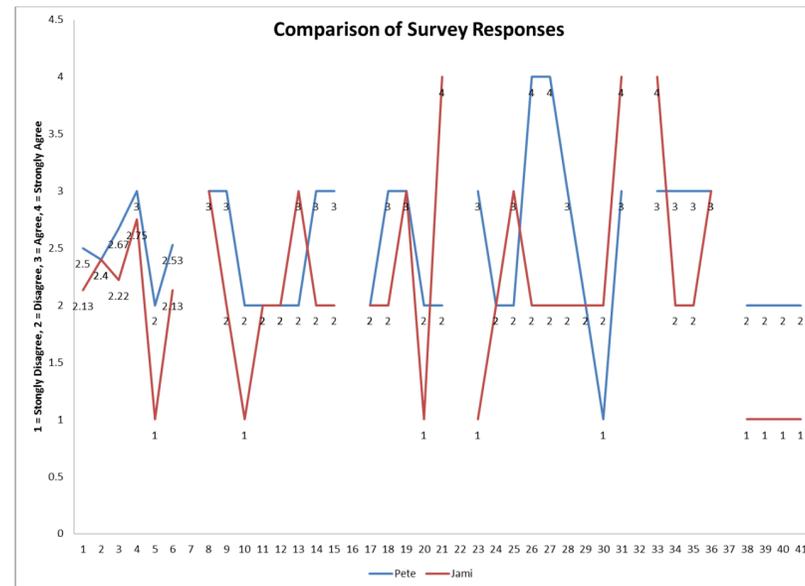
Organizational documents such as personnel policies, training manuals, and performance evaluations were reviewed.

Survey questions were administered to both Executive Director and Program Director regarding current leadership planning.

Literature review of best practices in staff development was conducted.

Consultation with experts in the field provided anecdotal information and shed insight on the organization’s needs.

Initial results are as follows: leadership views regarding the needs for staff development vary. More time should be taken to recognize potential leaders and train them. Current leadership at Marin Ventures understands the importance of staff development but are in the infancy stages of creating a support system to achieve the goal of succession planning and developing leaders for the future. Furthermore, the board of directors needs to support the Executive Director’s desires to sustain the internal leadership pipeline at Marin Ventures for the next 3-5 years.



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- Improve performance tools to better inform management about leadership potentials.
 - Format organizational chart to reflect current positions in the organization.
 - Strengthen performance evaluations by including competency goals and hold all staff members accountable to professional development plan.
- Using the 70/20/10 model of professional development, create more on-the-job training opportunities for the next level of leadership. If the next level is not attainable at the time or staff member does not seek the next level, then provide additional work opportunities in current position to broaden experiences., following the CompassPoint chart presented.
- Align leadership development goals with strategic goals.
 - Clearly define Marin Ventures strategic plan for the next 3-5 years as the premier organization to serve adults with developmental disabilities.
 - Include staff development as an objective in strategic plan specifically in the area of financial investment/growth.

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- Blue Avocado: <http://blueavocado.org/content/surprisingly-uncomplicated-path-developing-leaders#sthash.hvKA1KF3.dpuf>
- CompassPoint: <https://www.compasspoint.org/blog/movement-building-what-does-leader-need>