

CHAPTER 1

Self-Discovery

Self-examination is the first step toward discovering total community resources. Determine who you are, where you want to be, and what you need to get there.

This evaluation should occur regularly—at least *annually*. More often in times of stress. The examination should be both *internal and external*, involving feedback from everyone connected with your organization. And it must be *honest*. You have to answer difficult questions and face hard realities. The result will be greater strength and flexibility, regardless of external factors.

Table 1 offers a checklist for evaluation.

Table 1: Self-Examination

- Can you state your purpose in two or three sentences?
- What are your major accomplishments?
- What community need do you serve?
- Whom do you serve? (age, sex, race, income level, etc.)
- What services do you provide?
- Does everyone who could benefit from your services know how to obtain them?
- Who delivers your services? (paid staff, volunteers)
- How is staff evaluated? Are strong performers rewarded and weak performers encouraged?
- What are your strengths and weaknesses in each service area?
- What other organizations (profit or nonprofit) provide the same services?
- What is your performance rating compared to other providers?
- Can you demonstrate public demand/support for your services?
- What are your short- and long-term goals?
- Are they consistent with your purpose and services?
- Were your goals developed with input from:
 - Board?
 - Consumers?
 - Contributors?
 - Members?
 - Staff?
 - Volunteers?
 - Consultants?
- Do you have an action plan, which includes:
 - Program objectives for each service?
 - Performance schedule?
- Do you have an annual marketing/communications plan?

Table 1: Self-Examination
(cont.)

Will your goals require a change in:
Number/Type of persons served?
Services?
Staff?
Financial support?
Volunteer support?
Other?

Are you using technology effectively?

What internal and external factors could have a positive impact on your ability to achieve your goals?

What factors could have a negative impact?

What are your funding sources?

Memberships?
Service fees?
Income-generating activities?
Individual donors?
Federated campaigns?
Businesses/Corporations?
Foundations?
Government?
Religious organizations?
Other?

What non-cash support do you receive?

Volunteers?
Goods?
Services?
Other?

If you answered “no” to many of these questions, or couldn’t complete them, encourage your organization to commit more time to *planning and evaluating*. Planning and evaluating should occur *concurrently with resource development*. A healthy organization continually reviews program goals in light of available resources and other external factors. It’s this ability to *adapt resources* to needs that distinguishes the *successful*.