

Making Good Decisions

Editor's Note: All managers face the need to make decisions at work on almost a daily basis. For some, decision making is second nature; they can weigh the options, come to a conclusion, defend their position if necessary, and feel good about the process and the end result. Others have more difficulty with this skill and may even go out of their way to avoid making tough (and not so tough!) decisions. Either way, decision making is a critical aspect of our jobs and is a skill that can be learned and practiced. Learning how to make good decisions will bring more confidence and efficiency to your daily work. Thanks to Russell Consulting for the use of the following article; I hope you find it helpful. After reading this article, go out and make some decisions! Sara Minkoff, editor

Decision making is an important skill in our personal and professional lives, but can be a very difficult skill to develop. It is defined as the capacity to choose a course of action from among a number of alternatives. When done thoughtfully, it enables you to move in a specific direction with a high level of confidence that you have made the right choice and that the results will strengthen you or your organization's future. Despite the importance of decision making, however, we often find ourselves making choices that solve the wrong problem, don't attack the causes (which enables the problem to surface again and again), or fail to anticipate likely obstacles to implementation. In addition, we often neglect to evaluate whether we even made the right choice.

Making good decisions requires both good *intuition* and good *processes*. Intuition emerges from our right brain, while processes, from our left brain. When we have good intuition, it means that we give over to our right brain and heighten our self-awareness such that we *feel* and sense what is true or right based upon our personal history. Intuition is the collective wisdom that emerges from our experience—a wonderful gathering of our past successes and failures. Intuition is especially useful when we don't have all of the facts, when data is missing, and we have to go with what *feels* right. We develop our intuition by listening to that collective wisdom, by tuning into our sense of what seems to be true.

Good processes involve *left* brain thinking—where we apply our analytical skills to developing and following a thoughtful method for reaching the decision that best fits a specific situation. Where the intuitive side of problem solving strives to capture what *feels* right, the *analytical* side focuses on a careful analysis based upon data gathering and sorting.

The best approach to problem solving involves *both* sides of our brain in a rich synthesis of the intuitive and the analytical. The challenge is to create an effective analytical process that carves out space for the intuitive.

Here is the problem solving model that we have found to be effective as a way to include both halves of our brains:

1. Select & Define the Problem — What problem do we need to work on? What is/is not the problem? How extensive is the problem? You should gather data to help identify and define the problem that most needs solving and identify its impacts. It's okay, however, to go with your gut. What *feels* like the problem that needs solving now?

2. Define the Desired Outcome & the Higher Purpose — When the problem is solved, what will the short-term solution look like? What "higher purpose" or long-term goal will be achieved through addressing this problem? Here you should use your intuition. What *feels* like a good outcome? Part of this step involves describing measures of success. This aspect involves your analytical side. How will success in addressing the problem be measured? What measurable outcomes will be used to gauge the effectiveness of the solution?

3. List Potential Causes of the Problem — What factors and forces have caused this problem to exist? What *sustains* this problem? For this step in the problem solving process you should use both analysis and intuition. Both approaches help you identify the range of possible causes of a problem.

4. Identify Potential Roadblocks/Setbacks — What are the possible forces, factors, events, or constraints that may inhibit progress in addressing the problem? Scanning your environment, both present and future, for potential obstacles to success is more an intuitive than analytical process.

5. Identify the Actions to Address the Causes & Solve the Problem — What actions, once implemented, are part of the solution to the problem? How will the causes be directly addressed? What actions will you take to *proactively* respond to potential roadblocks and, therefore, protect your plan? Use both your intuitive and analytical side to explore the answers to this step of the process.

6. Develop an Implementation Timeline & Assign Responsibility for Action — Who is responsible for taking the specified actions? When will the actions occur? Developing the operational plan is very much an analytical process. At this step you are integrating all of the previous work into an implementation plan that builds in accountability for action and results.

7. Monitor Progress & Revise the Plan — Are you seeing the desired results? What actions need to be revised? What new actions should take place? What should you keep doing? Your process isn't complete without a formal and systematic way of monitoring your progress and making improvements to the plan. Your analytical side creates the process, your intuitive side tells you whether you've really accomplished what you wanted to.

President's Report



Elaine Glowacki, Wisconsin Nonprofits Association, elaine.glowacki@tds.net

Happy New Year! Because this is my first column for the new year, I declare that 2010 is the Year of the Member.

As new and returning members, there is something about DCAVS that compelled you to join. Was it a tangible benefit, such as our educational programs co-sponsored with United Way of Dane County, or this bi-monthly newsletter? Could it be our electronic membership directory or website?

What about the intangible benefits? Is DCAVS a refuge where everyone understands your trials and celebrates your successes? Is it a place for you to challenge yourself within your peer group and to be part of the evolution of our profession?

I invite each of you to really use your DCAVS benefits and determine, for yourselves, what's valuable and what else you wish we had for you. We need to know so we can serve you better.

And I challenge you to invest in yourself by engaging in DCAVS. Join a committee or a shorter-term project. No experience necessary! You may learn new skills or provide DCAVS with additional expertise to improve or expand our services. But as you work and laugh alongside the other DCAVS members who keep this 25-year-old organization moving, you will find your own personal support team and I guarantee that you will become a better volunteer manager.

A snapshot of what's ahead:

We welcome our 2010 officers and the new co-chairs of the Program Committee as we say goodbye to Glenn Mitroff, our president since 2005. Glenn is a big-picture leader, always looking to the end of the year to help us meet our commitments, such as solid programming and elections at our annual meeting. We will miss Glenn's even hand and gentle nature at our board meetings. Fortunately, Glenn will still be involved as he joins our Nominating Committee.

Our new officers are: Elaine Glowacki, Wisconsin Nonprofits Association, President; Judy Kingsbury, UW-Madison Arboretum, Vice President; Mark Fetzko, AIDS Network, Secretary; and Deb Crye, The Salvation Army of Dane County, Treasurer. We also welcome our new Program Committee co-chairs, Carrie Kreck, Madison Children's Museum, and Rick Orton, Madison Senior Center, who are taking over for Judy, our new Vice President.

At the board's annual strategic planning retreat this month we will look for ways to strengthen our core services. In strong partnership with the United Way Volunteer Center, we will continue our alternate-month Lunch & Learn programs, annual fall conference, and the relatively new Training Series for Volunteer Managers. We are very excited that in May the Wisconsin Volunteer Coordinators Association (WVCA) conference will be in our backyard at the Kalahari Resort in the Wisconsin Dells. Because of this, we are eliminating our regular Lunch & Learn program that month to encourage all volunteer management professionals to attend this very valuable educational and statewide networking event.



It's Not Too Late to Renew Your DCAVS Membership!

Don't forget to renew your DCAVS membership! Membership renewal is open to individuals or agencies for the same cost, \$35.00, for the calendar year, January-December. If an agency joins/renews, it's a cost savings for the agency; as many agency volunteer administration staff members can be listed in the DCAVS membership directory as contacts, and attend and participate in DCAVS programs and functions throughout the year for the DCAVS member fee. If you need a renewal form, contact Membership Committee Co-Chairs Kim Viney at kim.viney@oakwoodvillage.net or Diane Jones at dianej@westmadisonseiorcoalition.org.

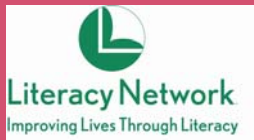
The Intersection Between Service and Technology: iPhone App

What's happening at the intersection of service, volunteering, and technology in the US? How will people search for volunteer opportunities in the near future? Are you poised to take advantage of any and all volunteer recruitment strategies?

At the 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service, a group of social entrepreneurs announced their new iPhone App from their company SnapImpact. This application, available for downloading from iTunes free, identifies volunteer opportunities based on the location of the phone. The application uses data from Hands-on Network and All For Good. To see a demonstration, view the video at <http://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/2009/07/02/conference-captures-snapimpact-on-their-new-iphone-app-for-volunteer-search/>

Are you ready to tap into volunteers with iPhones? Will this technology impact the way you recruit and market your volunteer opportunities?

To read more about SnapImpact, go to: <http://www.snapimpact.org/>



Member Profile: Literacy Network

Literacy Network, formerly known as Madison Area Literacy Council, serves primarily low income adults and families in need of literacy services by offering programs specifically tailored to the needs, goals, and different learning styles of the individual students. Literacy Network is located at 1118 South Park Street; we work with over 1,200 learners annually at a variety of locations around Dane County through our specialized group classes, drop-in ESL group classes, Community Tutoring program, and through the work of individual volunteer tutors.

Volunteers are at the heart of our work. Over 400 volunteers each year work with learners to help them achieve their employment, education and family goals. The majority of our volunteers are tutors working with ESL or Basic Literacy learners. Other opportunities include office support, newsletter and profile writing, and event assistance for our Literacy Network Run/Walk each fall and Literacy 24/7 Reading Marathon each spring. We encourage volunteers with specialized skills to meet with us to create a customized volunteer opportunity that matches their skills with specific program and organizational needs.

For more information on how you can help at the Literacy Network, please contact Lynn Pawelski via email at lynn@litnetwork.org, visit www.litnetwork.org or call 608.244.3911 Extension 22.

Give a Day Get a Disney Day: Rewarding Volunteers for Service

This year, Disney Parks is celebrating something new: the good things people do for their communities. In 2010, Disney wants to inspire one million people to volunteer a day of service to a participating organization in their communities and celebrate their good works by giving each of them one free day admission to a theme park at Disneyland® Resort or Walt Disney World® Resort.

Starting January 1, 2010, anyone can go to www.disney.com to search for volunteer opportunities made available through HandsOn Network and sign up for a day of volunteer service. As the nation's largest volunteer network, HandsOn Network connects volunteers to more than 70,000 nonprofit agencies that need their help. Many of the opportunities will be projects that entire families can participate in together. Volunteers must pre-register and sign up for eligible volunteer opportunities. Ticket quantities for this program are limited. Participants must be at least age 6 to participate. Other terms and conditions apply.

The Give A Day. Get A Disney Day. program is a unique opportunity to engage more volunteers in service through your organization and celebrate their good deeds. Any organization that is meeting a community need can collaborate with HandsOn Network in the Give A Day. Get A Disney Day. program. To learn how to register your organization as a volunteer placement site, and for full instructional manuals and videos on using the Volunteer Opportunity Portal, go to: <http://www.handsonnetwork.org/disney/training>

DCAVS/ United Way January Lunch and Learn Program

Not Really Volunteers....Working with Court Referred "Volunteers"

In this session, we'll hear from the court system and two nonprofit organizations who currently receive and place people working to fulfill court mandated "community service" hours. As Volunteer Administrators, this is a topic that concerns us and our agencies as we are the main source for these "hours." Do we "have" to provide these opportunities? What does it mean for our agency if we do? How do we interact with these "volunteers" – in other words, what are our responsibilities? How does the county program work? How do local municipal programs work? Is this too much work? All these questions and more will be answered during this informative session. Presenters will include: Melvin Juette, head of Dane County's First Offender Program; Carole Klopp, Coordinator of Volunteer Services for Middleton Outreach Ministries; and a representative of Dane County's Neighborhood Intervention Program. Please plan to attend!

Day/Date: Wednesday, January 20, 2010
Time: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Location: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton Street.
Participants are responsible for their own parking expenses.

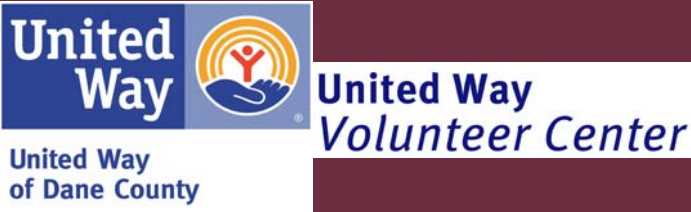
Registration Deadline: Thursday, January 14, 4 p.m.

Register by contacting Kathleen Van Den Wymelenberg, 608.661.2813 or kathleen@restoredane.org or Ella Benson, 608.237.1163 or BensonE@gsbadgerland.org. Registrations will be closed after 4 p.m.

The cost for this DCAVS Lunch and Learn Program is \$10.00 for members and \$15.00 for non-members. The cost includes meal and seminar fee. Payment is required, once registered, whether you attend or not. Everyone registered by the deadline and in attendance at the program by 11:45 a.m. is eligible to win a free Lunch and Learn Program certificate for a future program. A meal cannot be guaranteed to those arriving past 12:10 p.m.

Connecting Professional Women With Volunteer Opportunities

WomenOnCall.org connects women who are committed to sharing their personal and professional skills with nonprofit organizations that have specific and immediate volunteer needs. The mission of this organization is to make giving back realistic and efficient for both volunteers and non-profits. WomenOnCall.org is currently operating in Illinois, South Carolina and **Wisconsin!** WomenOnCall.org helps professional women choose a volunteer opportunity that fits their schedule using a secure, private and efficient web-based system. WomenOnCall.org connects professional women with the skills and expertise needed to help nonprofits grow and thrive. To learn more and register your volunteer opportunities, go to: <http://www.womenoncall.org/>



Want to Improve your Programs?

The recent DCAVS Lunch and Learn was about improving your agency's programs. Guy VanRensselaer took us through the process of leading programs to success. Here at the United Way Volunteer Center Non Profit Resource Library, we can assist your agency in doing this. With books to measure your program such as *Measuring up: Assessment Tools for Volunteer Programs*, which will assess your organization's success rate, *Measuring Program Outcomes: A practical approach*, which gives you step by step assistance on measuring your program and analyzing the outcomes, and *Managing a Nonprofit Organization in the Twenty-First Century*, a book about helping you run your nonprofit in this day and age, you would be on the path to bring your program to scale. We have titles in numerous subject categories, please call or stop by so we can help your agency on its road to success.

The Non Profit Resource Library is located in the United Way Volunteer Center at 2059 Atwood Avenue, and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. All materials are available for agencies like yours to check-out for two weeks. For further information please contact the volunteer center at 608.246.4380.

How do you say "to volunteer" in Spanish?

From VolunteerMatch Nonprofits Blog

Hispanic engagement is a hot topic these days. Whether your community has large Latino populations or not, nonprofits that service or are located in and around Spanish-speaking populations face some challenges in breaking into and working within the cultural and political environments.

Beyond the border, the numbers of Spanish-speakers in the U.S. are growing in nearly every city. And with the appointment of Judge Sonia Sotomayor to the Supreme Court, it's clear that political, cultural and social power is shifting to enable Hispanics to not only have more prominent voices in their own futures, but also to bring new ideas and energy into the independent sector.

To get some tips on what volunteer coordinators need to know about working in Spanish-speaking communities, VolunteerMatch staff spoke with Armando Rayo, a specialist in Hispanic engagement and the director of Hands On Central Texas, at the 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service.

Some findings from the interview with Rayo: It's no surprise that family and the language play a huge role in engagement and retention of new Spanish-speaking immigrants. But it may be surprising to learn that even second and third generation Hispanics respond differently from other U.S.-born cohorts. New immigrants actually volunteer at very high levels at churches and in their communities, but they often don't consider that to be volunteering in the traditional sense. Also, those volunteers usually discover their roles because they are asked by people in their communities — not on bulletin boards or Web services. For second and third generation Hispanics, the cause of identity continues to be a driving interest in their service. But even nonprofits that aren't focused primarily on Hispanic issues can respond by creating programs with an Hispanic approach.

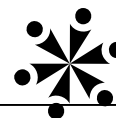
To watch the video interview, go to: <http://blogs.volunteermatch.org/engagingvolunteers/2009/06/26/conference-captures-armando-rayo-on-hispanic-engagement-strategies/>

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR 2010 PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALING

Individuals seeking to earn the CVA (Certified in Volunteer Administration) credential in 2010 may now register. This unique, international, performance-based program recognizes practitioners with at least 3 years of experience in the field of volunteer resources management. Originally developed decades ago by the Association for Volunteer Administration, the CVA program is now sponsored by the Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration.

Registration for the next cycle will remain open until March 1, 2010. However, the earlier you sign up, the sooner you can receive your materials and begin the process. Candidates registering for this cycle will be expected to take the on-line Exam at local sites in May 2010, and will have until December 2010 to complete the written Portfolio component. This is a self-study process, requiring no travel or special classes.

To get started, visit the CCVA web site at www.cvacert.org to read testimonials from recent CVAs and print a copy of the 2010 Candidate Handbook and registration form. Specific questions can be directed to CCVA at ccva@comcast.net or 804.794.8689.



The Network is published bimonthly by Dane County Administrators of Volunteer Services (DCAVS) as a benefit to its members. DCAVS promotes successful volunteer administration by facilitating the professional growth of its members through networking and training opportunities, as well as providing support through advocacy for the profession of volunteer administration in specific, and volunteerism in general. Visit us on the Web at <http://www.dcavs.org/>

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We welcome your contributions, comments and suggestions. Next deadline: February 1. Contact editor at sminkoff@wisc.edu or 608.263.7760.