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Injury Prevention Organizations in Canada: High Impact, Highly Creative?

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**Injury Prevention Organizations in Canada:
High Impact, Highly Creative?
by**

Pamela Fuselli

An Abstract of a Project
in
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

May 2010

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
Department of Creative Studies

ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

**Injury Prevention Organizations in Canada:
High Impact, Highly Creative?**

Public sector organizations, specifically those dealing with knowledge as their product, are assumed to function on different principles than organizations in the private sector. Non-profit organizations do not represent a sector that has been studied in terms of creativity, creative problem-solving or thinking skills, although they have been the subject of study in terms of societal impact and value, specifically in the United States. There is an important gap that could be filled through exploration of non-profit organizations in Canada in terms of what has been shown to be high impact as well as high creativity. This project looks at knowledge non-profits in the injury prevention sector in Canada by using the survey validated in *Forces for Good* research and characteristics of creativity and change leadership.



Signature

May 2, 2010

Date

Buffalo State College
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May 2, 2010

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If you ask me I would be if I could be anything it would be a professional student. There is a certain thrill in learning about ideas, opinions, theories and approaches that I will never tire of. These past two years have been a wonderful learning experience and there are many people who need to be recognized for the role they have played. For over 20 years, my friend Karen and I have embarked either formally or informally on education adventures. Without her, I may not have found this opportunity to combine creativity with leadership in my pursuit of a Master's degree. Our endless discussions and deliberations over pancakes at the Buttermilk Café are a key component in the creative projects I have completed. The faculty at the International Centre for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State are phenomenal teachers, but more importantly, they inspire their students to live what they learn every day with their passion. Of particular note, Dr. Gerard Puccio, Dr. Susan Keller-Mathers, the late Dr. Mary Murdock and Cynthia Burnett have made impressions that will last a lifetime. The GR8's are a wonderful global group with diverse perspectives. The team at Safe Kids Canada has been patient while I brought back theories and approaches to try out in meetings and with issues we faced. The injury prevention organizations and individuals across Canada who participated in this project really made this all possible. Without their interest in my work, their patience in the endless book recommendations I sent them and their generous gift of time have provided the valuable information contained in this project. My parents, Maureen and Gary, and my sister, Michelle, have been cheerleaders from the start. Their pride in my accomplishments and encouragement kept me working when there were too many things to do and not enough time to do them. Last but certainly not least, my

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Section One: Background to the Project

Purpose and Description

Public sector organizations, including those dealing with knowledge as their product, are assumed to function on different principles than organizations in the private sector. Proven practical business practices that make private sector organizations efficient and effective are somehow thought to be out of bounds for non-profits who are similarly expected to be efficient and effective. Dan Pallotta (2008), in his recent book *Uncharitable*, suggests “we have been force-fed a set of ideas about doing good that actually accomplish the opposite” and “that which we have been taught should upset our moral compass – profit, capitalism, the free market, the desire for personal material gain – is in fact the fuel that could power stunning change in the world.” (p. 7). To ensure that non-profits are effectively addressing “the weight of society’s most challenging problems” (Pallotta, 2008, p. 169), we need a framework within which non-profits can increase the probability of achieving such success. *Forces for Good* (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008), presents a study that examined non-profits in business founded between 1965 and 1994 in the United States that resulted in the identification of six principles of high impact non-profits. *Forces for Good* purposefully placed the organization’s revenue outside of the framework, so *Uncharitable* is a complimentary publication that is useful in setting the context within which non-profits, high impact or not, operate.

While called non-profits, they are really more-than-profits for certainly surpluses are welcomed and needed for sustainability. In particular, knowledge organizations that

focus prevention of injuries in the non-profit world are often held to standards not expected of private sector companies. Donors are interested in the outcomes, but not necessarily in investing in the expertise which are necessary to create those outcomes. Administrative and fundraising expenses above a certain percentage, and there is debate on what that percentage should be, are not considered an investment in excellence or to support the organization's mandate. How can fundraising, or administration related costs *not* be part of a program when without funds, no program would exist? Pallotta (2008) supports this view and states "efficiency measures ignore the all-important question of program effectiveness is but the beginning of the problem. They do not take into account the volume of good being done." (p. 168). From the conclusions in *Forces for Good*, effectiveness relates to high impact and is as important to measure as efficiency. This difference in standards is unfair and the expectations misplaced, putting extreme pressure on non-profits to simply cover their costs and does not allow them to create sustainability. In reality, public sector non-profits are an invaluable part of society, augmenting what governments are able to provide. Therefore, it is important that as many non-profits as possible are supported so their impact can be maximized. Measurements of engagement, validated with private sector organizations, can be turned on their heads because the individuals who choose to work in these organizations are willing to forgo the often perceived essentials of engagement, such as equipment, in return for being involved with work that fulfills a need to contribute to society and is meaningful. They are more often tested by resource restraints and leverage the creativity of staff on a day-to-day basis in order to overcome the challenges of cash flow and

achieve the greater good. Creativity, though, can be sacrificed in a trade off for the safety of the known. Pallotta (2008) is incredulous that “foundations would rather fund programs over and over and over again instead of fund experiments in fundraising. If foundations nurtured new revenue models, charities could generate their own revenue for programs.” (p. 86), thus freeing them from the constraints that traditional donors have been taught to impose on non-profits.

So to start exploring these issues in Canada, this project examined knowledge non-profits in the injury prevention sector in Canada by using the survey validated in *Forces for Good* research and characteristics of creativity and change leadership.

Rationale for Selection

Non-profits, or more-than-profits, occupy a unique place in the business community. In fact, many would not see these organizations as businesses at all except that the division is artificially man-made and enforced. “The for-profit sector is allowed to compensate people on the basis of their value. The nonprofit sector must limit compensation to some arbitrary threshold based on emotion and gut feeling... The myth is that charity is people helping other people and that the for-profit sector is people helping themselves... Because the for-profit sector doesn't help for free doesn't mean that it fails to provide a social benefit.” (Pallotta, 2008, p. 36).

Non-profits do not represent a sector that has been studied extensively in terms of creativity, creative problem-solving or thinking skills, although they have been the subject of study in terms of societal impact and value, specifically in the United States. Forces for Good provides a framework to explore non-profits in terms of the impact of their raison d'être. There is an important gap that could be filled through exploration of non-profit organizations in Canada in terms of what has been shown to be high impact as well as those conditions that increase creativity.

I am in a leadership role within the non-profit sector and have been frustrated with the lack of exploration and information about characteristics of high impact non-profits in the Canadian context. As a leader, I would be most interested to learn how Canadian non-profits can further their missions of impacting their specific issues through employing accepted business approaches, as well as investigating non-profits as models for creativity.

Section Two: Pertinent Literature

Narrative of Literature

Included are narratives on three books that informed my work during this project. Additionally, there were two other publications that contributed more peripherally to my thinking and brief descriptions are provided below.

Forces for Good

Crutchfield, L. & McLeod Grant, H. (2008). *Forces for good*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons

Forces for Good was the publication that really sparked the coming together of a number of related issues I was considering for the Master's Project. The publication reviewed a research study of non-profits in the United States and through the study identified six characteristics of what made non-profits high impact. Of course, I compared my non-profit with these six characteristics and found some similarities. Then I began to superficially look at other non-profits in the injury sector (of which I was most familiar and interested). I also noted while reading *Forces for Good*, a number of overlaps with creativity theories, attributions of creative leaders as well as environment/climate. I wanted to explore how these attributes overlapped, if in fact they did overlap, in the injury sector. I also wondered what could position this sector for greatness in the coming decade, as the sector seem to be perched on the tipping point. Additional information that might propel us over the top would be of value to the sector.

Shortly after completing *Forces for Good*, I had the opportunity to present with the author, Leslie Crutchfield, at a YMCA meeting of CEO's who were looking to the

work presented in the book to assist them in taking their organization to the next level. My presentation was to provide an example of an organization that was executing some of the characteristics of a high-impact non-profit. Through a conversation with Leslie as well as a colleague who is the director for social entrepreneurship, I realized that this could be a much bigger project – creating the Canadian equivalent of *Forces for Good* – but potentially including the creativity aspect. My Master's Project provides the first steps looking at a particular sector in non-profits – injury prevention.

What the Dog Saw

Gladwell, M. (2009). *What the dog saw*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.

What the Dog Saw was holiday reading and again I saw links to inform my project. This book is a collection of short stories to highlight a particular phenomenon and in the section, Late Bloomers, I found some real world examples of creativity. For example, when exploring the success in later life that some individuals achieve Gladwell cites David Galenson's work examining the differences between prodigies and late bloomers. It has assumed that later bloomers are late starters, however, employing the creativity theory of trial and learn, the author explored a number of examples, such as Mark Twain's decade of attempts to write *Huckleberry Finn*, that show late bloomers do not necessarily start late, they are just not good until later in life. An interesting concept when compared to the high impact non-profit characteristics.

Another section, The Talent Myth, in *What the Dog Saw* resonated with my Project. The Talent Myth explores the question Are Smart People Overrated? and comes

to an interesting conclusion using real world examples of management consulting firms in the 1990's postulation that talent needs to be rewarded, affirmed and basically given whatever they want regardless of the cost of an efficient organization. Exploring the failures of companies like Enron who employed this theory, as well as comparing the successes and failures of two approaches to sinking U boats in WWII, Gladwell (2009) concludes that "The talent myth assumes that people make organizations smart. More often than not, it's the other way around." (p. 371). He goes on to give examples such as Southwest Airlines, Wal-mart and Proctor & Gamble, who employ the opposite theory to the talent myth. This interested me in terms of the relationship of the organization to the employees and leaders. What might high impact non-profits look like?

Uncharitable

Pallotta, D. (2008). *Uncharitable*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England.

I felt like I had found my soul mate when I read the review by Renee Irwin in the Stanford Social Innovation article on *Uncharitable* written by Dan Pallotta. Irwin muses that "Pallotta reviewed the frugal, almost prudish constraints the public expects from nonprofits, everything from a ban on paid advertising to substandard wages for nonprofit employees. But if we want the nonprofit sector to do without the successful tactics of the business sector – say, marketing – how can we expect the nonprofit sector to aspire to greatness?" (Pallotta, 2008, p. 19). Exactly! These types of restraints keep non-profits from achieving high impact (or even higher impact as some organizations are successful

in spite of restraints) and while some might argue restraints keep non-profits creative, I would counter that expending precious energy on maintaining the bottom line put a significant damper on the time non-profits can spend being creative. The author of *Uncharitable* makes arguments that are logical, such as that charities compete with each other but also in the marketplace for the consumer's dollars as "we don't have one currency for charity and another for consumer goods" (p. 46). Those who are able to advertise, for example, are likely to generate more revenues or contributions. That the rules preclude charities from advertising puts them at a distinct disadvantage.

Other Publications That Contributed To Project

Several other publications also contributed to this project and below is a short summary of three:

Creative leadership: Skills that drive change.

Puccio, G.J., Murdock, M.C., & Mance, M. (2007). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Productions.

Creative Leadership was the first book that really linked creativity and leadership for me. As I made my way through the book and subsequent course work, the link between creativity and leadership within the nonprofit sector became clearer. The *Forces for Good* book was what catalyzed the related but somewhat diverse ideas that I had considered as potential Masters Project material.

Good to Great

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to Great*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

I read this book for the first time a number of years ago but re-read it more recently when I took on the role of executive director in 2007. The concepts Collins presents are ones that can be applied to a wide range of sectors and organizations. The primary concept that influenced this project was what Collins calls the “hedgehog.” The analogy is that a hedgehog is good at one thing and by focusing on that one thing, the hedgehog is great at what s/he does. For example, a person who stocks shelves at a grocery store is there to provide a good experience for customers, ensuring items are on shelves. To be great, that person would do the best job possible, e.g. walking with customers to show them where an item is instead of simply pointing in the general direction. Collins advances the notion that time concept is transferable to those organizations who are great. The high impact organizations that made it onto the *Forces for Good* list have elements of this focused vision.

Selected Bibliography

There were many other publications that, to some extent, informed my thinking. Some were read for personal growth and others specifically for this project.

Bell, J., Moyers, R. & Wolfred, T. (2006) *Daring to lead 2006: A national study of nonprofit executive leadership*. San Francisco, CA: CompassPoint.

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Section Three: Process Plan

Introduction

Mapping of the different ideas for the Masters Project visually, speaking with both Leslie Crutchfield, author of *Forces for Good*, and presenting on how my organization embodies some of the principles found to be practices of high impact non-profits enabled a focus to be reached. Over a number of months, I noted ideas and filed them away, allowing time and discussion with others to draw connections between ideas and discard those that were not appropriate. The presentation with author Leslie Crutchfield brought some of the ideas to the forefront, highlighting the fact that my organization was practicing some of the six principles noted in *Forces for Good*, and confirmed my thoughts about exploring the sector within which I worked. In addition, over the course of the development of the project's framework as well as the writing of this paper, my organization has been involved in an exploration of how four national organizations could find a game changer to work more collaboratively and in doing so advance the agenda of reducing injury in Canada. This activity in particular has exposed me to new ways of thinking, of considering new opportunities and as Pallotta (2009) asks "Do we want things to change, or do we want them to stay the same? Do we want the status quo, masquerading behind meaningless modifications, or do we want the world of our dreams? Are we fighting on the side of our causes and the needy for whom they are intended, or are we fighting on the side of the system?" (p. 170). This is the context in which the exploration of what it means to be a high impact, creative organization.

Process Description

Once focus was reached, it was straightforward enough to utilize the executive director interview and organization survey from *Forces for Good* (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008). What took some time and deliberation was the creation of the survey that would form the basis for evaluating the climate/environment of the organizations participating in the project and creating the basis to look at characteristics of high impact non-profits with creative climate. I consulted Runco (2007) and reviewed several models that addressed characteristics of creative climates such as Ekvall and Ryhammar (1999) definitions of “organizations climate in terms of the interplay of institutional policies, goals, strategies, tasks, workload, resources, technology and of course, staff. They suggest that creative outcomes are the most likely if the organizational climate does the following:

1. Challenges individuals with tasks, goals, and institutional operations. Work must be meaningful. The development and survival of the organization is important to employees.
2. Employees must have opportunities and initiative. This may be apparent in how communication within and outside the organization and the methods available obtain information. Communication rules are important.
3. There must be support for new ideas. They are encouraged and rewarded.
4. Employees must be trusted and feel that trust. This will support their initiative. Risk is minimal because employees know they are trusted and in turn trust the organization (e.g. leaders, managers).
5. There is a permissive environment with frequent discussion and debate but no actual animosity.
6. Risk taking is supported. Experiments and the accompanying risks are tolerated. Risk is viewed as part of the creative process.”

(p. 164)

I constructed questions using a Likert Scale (see Appendix B) based on these six outcomes. Google surveys were created for the general organization survey and the creative climate survey. Throughout this time, I was conducting a literature review and exploring publications that helped to inform and direct my overall exploration.

As the executive director of a national injury prevention organization, I have the privilege of working with diverse and talented people from across Canada. In my daily work, the goal is to make an impact, to reduce the tragic burden of preventable injuries. To achieve this goal, it is essential to employ strategies that are creative, to creatively solve challenges and to direct energy to activities that will make the organization the highest impact possible. It is the relationships with those dedicated to the same outcomes that made it possible for me to engage the organization leaders who shared the information in this project. Without their keen interest in this work, allowing me to conduct personal interviews with them, and completing a fairly lengthy survey about their organization, none of this would have been possible.

Late in January, I sent out invitations to eight nonprofit injury prevention organizations/their executives. Within days, six had agreed to participate and I sent them the executive director interviews questions so they could consider them prior to the in-person or telephone interview. Each also received the general organization survey (30 minutes completion time) via Google and all but one completed this survey. The majority of interviews were conducted via telephone throughout the last week of February. During several interviews, individuals shared with me their interest in seeing the final outcomes of this work. Staff at the participating organizations was sent the

creative climate survey (15 minute completion time) via Google at the end of February and they could voluntarily respond. Interestingly, two interviewees asked if they could see the results of their staff responses to the creative climate survey. The results were not shared due to confidentiality. Instead, I offered to make the survey available so that they could use the tool with their staff.

As Sections 1-3 of this project were being completed, the analysis of the executive director interviews and surveys was begun. In terms of analysis, I waited until the surveys had been returned and then reviewed both the survey results and the executive director interview information. I went through the responses and highlighted the factors/characteristics that compared to the six characteristics of high impact non-profits as outlined in *Forces for Good* (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008). Throughout the project, confidentiality was maintained and no individual responses were shared. The results were presented in a summary format, without identifying individuals or organizations as the goal was to gain an overall understanding of the injury sector as it compares to the six characteristics of high impact non-profits along with a creative climate assessment.

Project Timeline

Table 1 outlines the project timelines and number of hours spent on each activity. It includes the development and planning, execution, analysis and writing as well as evaluation components of the project. Time was included to allow for additional reading, research and analysis as well as to allow ample time for respondents to consider the

questions. Additionally, feedback and discussions with both a project classmate sounding board partner and professor are noted in the timelines.

Table 1***Project Final Timeline***

January		
Activity	Number of hours	Individuals involved
Transpose Forces for Good survey	2 hours	Pamela Fuselli
Identify and create survey questions for creativity-specific indicators	5 hours	Pamela Fuselli in consultation with Sounding Board Partner and Dr. Keller Mathers
Consult with key informants	3 hours	Pamela Fuselli
Literature review	10 hours	Pamela Fuselli
February		
Activity	# Hours	Individuals Involved
Obtain agreement for participation	3 hours	Pamela Fuselli
Disseminate surveys (develop Google survey tool)	5 hours	Pamela Fuselli
Conduct interviews	15 hours	Pamela Fuselli and participants
March		
Activity	# Hours	Individuals Involved
Analyze results	15 hours	Pamela Fuselli in consultation with Sounding Board Partner
Conduct evaluations – 360	8 hours	Pamela Fuselli
April		
Activity	# Hours	Individuals Involved
Write up final report	50 hours	Pamela Fuselli

Section Four: Outcomes

Introduction

The Concept Paper identified the outcome of this project as “A model that would outline the characteristics of non-profits that are both high impact and creative, using Canadian organizations in the field of injury prevention as a pilot.” (see Appendix D). I wanted to explore the climate within which non-profits operated, the ideas of what a high impact non-profit should look like according to *Forces for Good* (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008) research in the injury prevention field in Canada and add to that the creativity aspect. While this would benefit me as a leader of a non-profit in this field, my hope was also to share key learnings to my colleagues across Canada.

In order to achieve this, I first had to identify the characteristics of non-profits that were high impact, which was taken from *Forces for Good*. For the creative component I decided to focus on the climate or environment of the organization since I had already collected information on the individual leader and their leadership style through the executive director interviews as well as the general organization. The creative climate survey, explores the organizations from their staff’s perspective. The results were three groups of information:

- Results from the Executive Director Interviews
- Results from collecting general organizational information
- Results from collecting climate/environment information

The outcomes were quite interesting. First, even though I have worked with many of the individuals and organizations for many years, I learned new information about them. Second, even before the formal review of the information was undertaken, I could identify trends and similarities among the organizations. And third, unplanned outcomes such as individuals requesting to see the results from the climate survey indicated the level of interest in the outcomes of this project.

Resulting Products

Executive Director Interview Results

Only one interview was conducted face to face. The balance of the interviews were completed over the telephone and the executive directors received the questions ahead of time in order to have the opportunity to think about the answers.

The result was the creation of a table of unedited responses with comparative information on each executive director, director, or CEO. This table allowed a review, compare and contrast the executive director answers between/among each other. It then supported the analysis of these organizations in terms of the six characteristics of high impact non-profits.

General Organization Survey Results

The result of the General Organization Survey was the creation of a table with comparative information on each organization (see Table 2 High Impact Characteristics Comparison). This table allowed a review that compared and contrasted the

organizations between/among each other, as well as with the Executive Director Survey results. The table provides as summary of these organizations in terms of the six characteristics of high impact non-profits which are explored in more detail in the Summary of Outcomes section of this project.

Table 2
High Impact Characteristics Comparison

High Impact Characteristics	Injury Prevention Organizations
<p>Advocate and serve Bridge the divide between service and advocacy and become good at doing both; the more they advocate and serve, the greater the levels of impact they achieve. (p. 21)</p>	<p>Only one organization specifically identified advocacy as part of their core activities along with programming, although another referred to government relations indirectly.</p>
<p>Make markets work Tapping into the power of self-interest and the laws of economics; find ways to work with markets and help business “do well while doing good”; influence business practices, build corporate partnerships and develop earned-income ventures (p. 21)</p>	<p>Two organizations reported tapping into a business model and one in particular in earned income revenue. One referred to using an enterprising approach.</p>
<p>Inspire evangelists Create meaningful ways to engage individuals in emotional experiences that help them connect to the group’s mission and core values; see volunteers, donors and advisors for what they can do as evangelists for their cause (p. 22)</p>	<p>At least three organizations have found meaningful ways to mobilize their staff, board members, injured individuals and volunteers to promote the vision/mission or a particular program of the organization.</p>
<p>Nurture non-profit networks Instead of seeing other non-profits as competition, help the competition succeed, building networks of non-profit allies and devoting remarkable time and energy to advancing their larger field; freely share wealth, expertise, talent and power with their peers (p. 22)</p>	<p>This is a key characteristic that defines the injury prevention sector overall and organizations individually. Whether it is via partnerships, networks, collaborative or alliances, all organizations reported that connections that build capacity are essential for success. Within this discussion, a theme of the importance of organization’s reputation emerged, either preserving or maintaining.</p>
<p>Master the art of adaption Exceptionally adaptive, modifying tactics as needed to increase success; mastered the ability to listen, learn and modify to sustain impact and stay relevant (p. 22)</p>	<p>Looking at the answers throughout the information provided, and specifically at the scalability question on the General Organization Survey, it was apparent that all organizations have embraced adaption at some point. Some organizations out of necessity and others over time or as a result of an opportunity that fit with their mandate. One respondent summarized it best “there is a willingness to adapt but not comprising on the lowest common denominator.”</p> <p>Through a set of circumstances not all within their control, the injury prevention sector has fought to remain relevant because of strong beliefs that we can and must be successful.</p>
<p>Share leadership CEOs are exceptionally strategic and gifted entrepreneurs but know they must share power; distribute leadership throughout their organization and networks; empower others to lead; cultivate a strong second-in-command, build enduring executive teams with long tenure and develop highly engaged boards (p. 22)</p>	<p>Five organizations gave examples of leadership styles that were supportive of the shared leadership concept. Through building strong teams, maintaining high standards, setting the vision/goals and then letting individuals do their work, being supportive and collaborative are all approaches that these organizations use.</p>

Note: High Impact Characteristics from Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008

In addition to the information summarized in Table 2, a few interesting themes emerged as the analysis progressed. Additional information described next is not related directly to the six characteristics of high impact non-profit, but are observations I made through the interview information collected.

Among the organizations who participated, there was a wide variety of organizational beginnings, from one individual starting the organization to the formation of the organization based on a government recommendation. However, the most distinct difference was between those organizations that operated within a provincial domain versus those operating from a national perspective.

Overall, there was difficulty articulating answers to the questions “What is the organization’s theory of change?” and “How does the organization execute its strengths and weaknesses?” In the feedback provided by those interviewed, some chose to interpret the question and others not to answer based on lack of information/ understanding of the question(s).

Structurally, the number of executive directors over the organization’s history ranged from two to six. Several identified low turnover rates of staff. In terms of Boards of Directors, the organizations ranged from no board to a board of 25 members. The involvement of those with boards in day-to-day operations also varied, however, all noted the value of the support from the board as being important to their success.

The majority of the organizations have well defined structures, policies and procedures though not all. Those who reported having just enough structure, policies and procedures reported being as successful as those with more. Most of the organizations

were designed to scale up from the beginning, most have scaled up and that has been undertaken successfully. In other words, there was thought at the formation of each organization of expansion of the organization's activities. The impacts of each organization ranged from measuring the reduction in number of deaths and hospitalizations to number of individuals on listervs to the number of PINs sold.

Creative Climate Survey Results

Table 3 outlines rankings and averages for each question on the Creative Climate Survey. The Likert scale used ranged from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent) for each question. The majority of organizations, five of six, were willing to have staff complete this tool and a couple were interested enough to ask for more information on the specifics of the survey responses. Sixteen responses, or just over 50%, were received out of 34 invitations.

The three questions ranked the highest average included:

- Question 8 "To what degree is the Mission of the organization clear?"
- Question 2 "To what degree do employees have opportunities to take the initiative?"
- Question 4 "To what degree are employees trusted and feel that trust?"

The three questions ranked the lowest average included:

- Question 5 "To what degree is there a permissive environment with frequent discussions and debate (but no animosity)?"

- Question 1 “To what degree do you feel challenged to complete tasks, goals and operations in your organization?”
- Question 6 “To what degree is risk taking supported?”

It is not surprising to me that Question 5 and Question 6 ranked in the lowest three as these are more difficult to achieve, however, it is interesting that there wasn't a closer correlation to Question 3 and Question 6 as they explore aspects of new ideas and risk taking. Creative climate has been explored in terms of fostering a try and learn environment as well as support for open, divergent discussion. Both of these characteristics are recognized in the creativity field as contributing to creativity, therefore Question 5 and Question 6 should be of interest to an organization's creativity level, and specifically to creative problem solving.

It should be encouraging to the organizations that their Mission's are clear and that employees feel trusted as well as have opportunities to take initiative. Overall the results of the Creative Climate Survey showed that the injury prevention organizations who participated in this project tend to be strong in terms of fostering a creative environment to support their staff.

Table 3
Creative Climate Survey

1. To what degree do you feel challenged complete tasks, goals and operations in your organization?	2. To what degree do employees have opportunities to take the initiative?	3. To what degree are employees encouraged and/or rewarded for new ideas?	4. To what degree are employees trusted and feel that trust?	5. To what degree is there is a permissive environment with frequent discussion and debate (but no actual animosity)?	6. To what degree is risk taking supported?	7. To what degree is there organization integration?	8. To what degree is the Mission of the organization clear?	
4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	5
4	5	5	5	5	4	5	5	5
4	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	4
4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	5
4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
3	5	4	5	4	4	3	4	5
3	4	4	4	4	3	4	4	5
4	3	4	4	4	4	4	5	5
4	5	3	4	4	3	3	3	5
2	3	2	1	1	2	1	3	2
4	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	5
4	4	3	5	5	5	3	4	5
4	5	5	5	5	5	3	4	5
4	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	5
2	5	5	5	5	4	1	5	5
3.6875	4.4375	4.125	4.25	3.9375	3.4375	4.0625	4.6875	

Note: Developed from Ekvall & Ryhammar (1999) definitions of creative outcomes.

Summary of Outcomes

Injury prevention organizations are definitely on the path to high impact, as defined by the six principles of high impact organizations. Organizations participating in this project embraced all of the six practices of high impact non-profits identified in Crutchfield & McLeod Grant (2008) *Forces for Good*. Three stood out as having all six principles well integrated into their organizations. Nurturing networks, mastering the art of adaption and shared leadership are all approaches these non-profits utilize. Steve Case, who wrote the foreword in *Forces for Good*, dreams

Imagine executives and boards thinking beyond their own needs, collaborating with their competitors to share scarce investment dollars, and developing a network of active, engaged supporters who can transform an entire field. Imagine a cohort of nonprofit leaders geared towards innovation, prepared to adapt their organizations to changes in the nonprofit marketplace and able to refresh their operating structures with regular waves of creativity.

(Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008, p. viii)

The above is a description of a true combination of high impact, creative organizations. Crutchfield and McLeod Grant (2008) in *Forces for Good* posit that “the next leap is to see nonprofits as *catalytic agents of change*.” (p. 4). Throughout the book, I found links with creativity theories – “learning new ways of thinking and acting” linked to opening one’s mind to creative problem solving techniques, being “highly adaptive, innovative leaders who see new ways to solve old problems and who find points of leverage to create large-scale systemic change” linked with Kirton’s Adaptor & Innovator (KAI)

Theory (1994) that identifies a spectrum; one end being that of an adaptor who works within systems to make change and the other end being that of an innovator who works from outside systems to make change. In addition, the idea that support for the ability to learn from mistakes and take risks appears in both *Forces for Good* and can be related to the concept of change.

Crutchfield and McLeod Grant (2008) reported that “building an organization is only part of the story. These high impact nonprofits work with and through other organizations – and they have much more impact than if they acted alone.” (p. 107). *Nurturing nonprofit networks* is, and has been, a strength of the majority of organizations in the injury prevention sector in Canada. The results of the information collected certainly supports that perception, with respondents identifying partners and collaborative networks as very important in various aspects of their work, e.g. raising the profile of the issue, sharing information. Interesting, a relative newcomer to the injury prevention sector commented on the lack of competition between/among these and other injury prevention organizations across Canada compared to other sectors. These organizations working in injury prevention have the ability to pick up the telephone or send an email and gain access to expertise, tools, strategies, and exchange ideas. *Forces for Good* goes even further and states that high impact nonprofits “at times...make significant short-term organizational sacrifices to move the larger cause forward – they put their long-term vision and desire for impact above their own self-interest.” (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008, p. 107).

Injury prevention has been struggling for many years to gain the attention the issue deserves as it is the leading killer of Canadians between 1 and 44 years (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2009). Being adaptable, flexible, resourceful, committed and downright dogged are characteristics of all who have worked for the cause of injury prevention. These principles are strongly represented in the injury prevention organizations who participated in this project.

One of the reasons nurturing non-profit networks is so successful is the longevity of the leaders within the injury prevention sector. From the information collected from participants about leadership style, many used the shared leadership approach. Supporting staff, setting goals and letting staff do their job, and not being afraid to do whatever it takes to achieve the mission of the organization are all approaches these leaders take. This reality is reflected in the responses to the Creative Climate Survey, where staff indicated there was the ability to take the initiative and they felt trusted in the organization.

Opportunities to Leverage

Based on the comparison of information from participating organizations with the six characteristics of high impact non-profits, there are a number of opportunities for individual organizations as well as the injury sector as a whole.

The first practice identified in *Forces for Good* is **advocate and serve**, noting of high impact non-profits that “the more they advocate and serve, the greater the levels of impact they achieve.” (p. 21). All of the organizations are involved with program

delivery. While most of the organizations are involved in advocacy, more than what was reported in the information provided through the survey or interview, this remains an area that the injury sector should continue to explore more purposefully as it is incredibly powerful agent for change. Crutchfield and McLeod Grant (2008) report that “Conventional wisdom dictates that nonprofits should focus on one or the other [advocacy or programs]. Thus it’s even more surprising that *all of the organizations in our book have engaged in both.*” (p. 33).

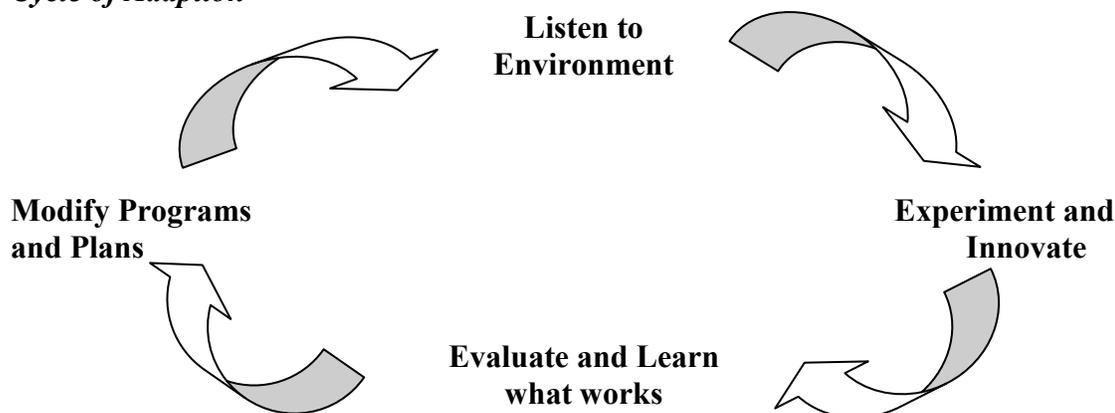
A second area of opportunity for the injury prevention sector to look more closely at is *making markets work*. There are only a couple of examples of this approach working in injury prevention so there is much to learn from these successes and expand into other areas. As stated at the beginning of this paper, often non-profits shy away from business approaches, either feeling that making money goes against their charitable status or through legal restraints, when in fact earning surpluses should be allowed to be re-invested into the organization and its cause as a way to diversity revenue streams. According to Crutchfield and McLeod Grant (2008), high impacts “recognize what economists have long known: tapping into the power of self-interest is more effective than appealing to altruism.” (p. 58). Social entrepreneurship and social ventures has emerged as a sector where “innovative enterprises combine a strong social purpose with sound business practices, rather than being solely driven by the need to maximize profit.” (Golden, Hewitt, Lewkowitz, McBane & Torjman, 2009, p. 2). Allyson Hewitt, a colleague and friend, describes the injury prevention sector organizations as more-than-profits recognizing the need for and importance of revenue for non-profits. Again,

Crutchfield and McLeod Grant (2008) report that “the high impact nonprofits we studied are at the forefront of this larger trend sweeping both sectors [non-profit and corporate] – and blurring the boundaries between them.” (p. 59). They identify different ways that non-profits can help corporation do well while doing good, for example helping to change business practices and leveraging the expertise of corporations that non-profits could not afford to purchase.

At least three organizations who participated in this project have engaged what *Forces for Good* (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008) calls *evangelists* to further their causes. Attempting to build a credible reputation in the injury prevention sector may have directed organizations to focus more on data, best practices and evaluation. In addition, it is sometimes difficult to engage those individuals and/or families to come forward and speak about their injury experiences, especially if the injury resulted in death. The preventability message that organizations communicate can translate into blame and guilt. This needs to be turned into empowerment to prevent future injuries. High impact non-profits “go beyond building a community among their internal staff and clients; they actively mobilize the public for greater social change.” (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008, p. 83). In these organizations, individuals “help nonprofits increase their power and influence” as they “represent both voters and consumers, with the power to move governments and markets.” (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008, p. 84). Using research on human psychology, best leveraged in the for-profit sector by marketing departments, individuals respond to emotional and personal messages. It is an opportunity that the injury prevention sector can use more extensively.

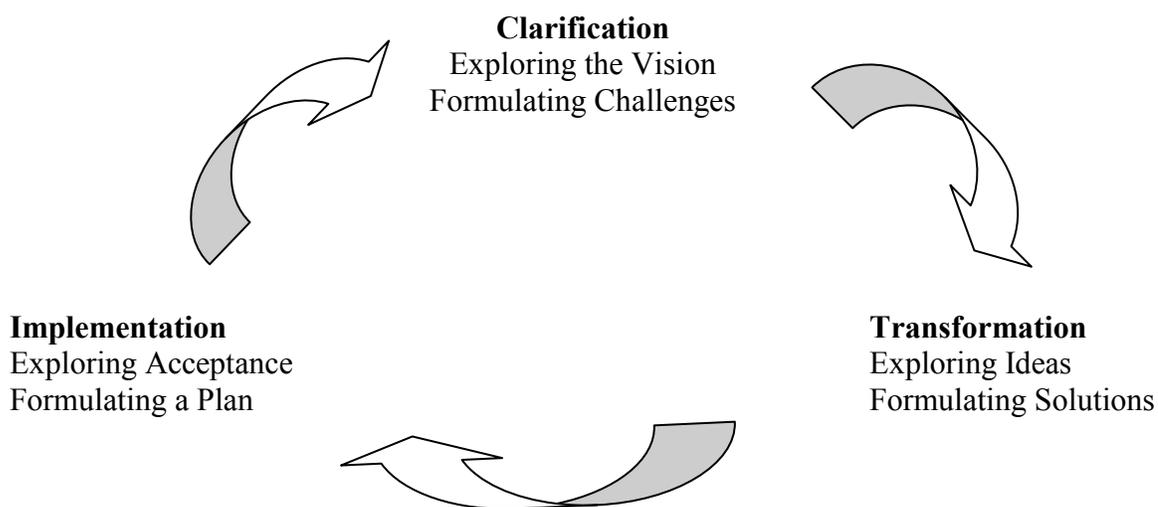
Mastering the art of adaption, one of the six principles of high impact non-profits outlined in *Forces for Good*, is complimented by the creativity theory, Kirton’s Adaption & Innovation Adaption (KAI) Theory, discussed previously. Crutchfield and Grant (2008) report that qualities of adaption “ability to ask, listen, reflect and adapt” are hard to find, yet the “each of the twelve organizations in this book is highly adaptive – able to perceive changes in the environment and develop new approaches in response.” (p. 130). Figure 1 shows the Cycle of Adaption model in *Forces for Good* (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008) and is remarkable similar to the creative problem solving model *Creative Leadership: Skills that Drive Change* (Puccio, Murdock & Mance, 2007) shown in Figure 2. The first phase of each cycle, listen to the environment and clarification, both speak to the need to really know and be clear on what is being adapted or solved. The second and third phases in the Cycle of Adaption and the second phase in Creative Problem-Solving explore options, learn and evaluate effective solutions. The final phases of both cycles look at the implementation of the plan and continued modification.

Figure 1
Cycle of Adaption



Note: from Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, Forces for Good, 2008

Figure 2
Creative Problem-Solving: The Thinking Skills Model



Note: from Puccio, Murdock & Mance, Creative Leadership: Skills that Drive Change, 2007

The injury prevention organizations that participated in this project have all adapted at one point or another, whether by necessity or when an opportunity presented itself. One respondent summarized the goal best “there is a willingness to adapt but not comprising on the lowest common denominator.” It will be important for all injury prevention organizations to listen to external clues percolating in the Canadian environment presently, experiment and innovate to ensure continued relevancy and to evaluate and modify what works and what does not. Crutchfield and Grant (2008) identify that what *not* to do is as important as what *to* do. Key to this is the ability to find a balance “of adaption and of strategy” (p. 148).

Share leadership is the last of the six principles identified in *Forces for Good* and a principle which the majority of injury prevention organizations participating in this project identified as a key component of their organizations. Interesting, the authors of *Forces for Good* did not expect to find this model of shared leadership “after all, in business – and in much leadership literature – the individual heroic leader is often exalted.” (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008, p. 155). They go on to say that the “CEOs of high impact nonprofits share a commitment that goes beyond their own egos, and they use their leadership to empower others. Every one of the twelve groups we studied has an empowered executive team and strong second-in-command...They have distributed leadership throughout their organization, and often throughout their larger network of allies and affiliates as well.” (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008, p. 156). In fact, the authors believe that the leaders “not only put the interests of their organizations ahead of their personal egos, they often put their overall cause ahead of their organization’s interest.” (Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008, p. 159).

Most of the injury prevention organizations that participated in this project have leaders who are distinct from their organizations, meaning the organizations would continue if these leaders left the organization. Many have been involved in or in a leadership role for a significant number of years, ranging from 2 years to 15 years. One organization has the founder as the leader and one has the founder significantly engaged in the work of the organization. The majority of leaders in these organizations reported taking the approach of hiring good people and letting them do their jobs. They also

clearly articulated to their teams that there was an open door policy should support or clarification be needed but they were not interested in micro-managing.

Forces for Good (2008) provides six principles that non-profits have been evaluated against and found to be indicators of high impact organizations. The injury prevention organizations that participated in this project show that, to a greater or lesser degree, all six principles are being actively applied within this sector in Canada. Significant opportunities exist within and among these organizations to look more closely and purposefully at these principles to evaluate how and when they could be applied.

Section Five: Key Learnings

Introduction

In order to explore the key learnings of this project, they have been separated into process, creativity, leadership, and change. Overall, the goals were to:

- Develop criteria that compared and contrasted the principles of high impact non-profits with models that enhanced creativity in organizations.
- Formulate recommendations that combine best practices for high impact non-profits with creativity models.
- Evaluate a pool of injury prevention non-profits in Canada.

The second and third goals have been met. The first goal, while it was met, provides future potential to expand beyond what has been accomplished with this project.

Process

Forces for Good, the executive director interview and survey, worked very well in framing my project and the discussion. When I first read the book and spoke with one of the authors, Leslie Crutchfield, I thought that the six principles of high impact nonprofits were excellent and applicable to the injury prevention sector. The focus on the outcomes of the organizations, instead of the outputs, attracted my interest because those are the important impacts by which non-profits should be measured. Subsequent readings, for example *Uncharitable*, complimented the *Forces for Good* premise.

Using the survey tool on Google worked well for the General Organization Survey. Participants accessed it easily and the compilation of results was also easy to import and organize.

While the survey tool on Google worked well for the Creative Climate Survey as well, however the collection chart didn't allow me to see which organization the responses were from and I didn't identify this until many responses were already received. In addition, because staff from the organizations were not informed of the project prior to receiving the survey, the response rate was lower than expected.

Creativity

Three goals were set out in the original Concept Paper (Appendix D) related to creativity:

- Improve my skill in identifying examples of real world application of creativity principles.
- Can I find them in action? Will the survey on creative environment measure what I intend it to measure?
- If I can find them, are those engaged in the activities aware that what they are doing is creative theory?

Through this process I was able to see examples of real world application of creativity principles in action – at least on a small scale. Overall the creative climate

survey tool gave an indication of measurements across the organizations. Given that the project is not research-based, it was not the intent to examine the outcomes in terms of reliability, validity or representativeness of the outcomes. Rather it was intended to provide some information and exploration of a snapshot of particular injury prevention organizations from across Canada.

While individuals and organizations engaged in the injury prevention sector would not necessarily identify themselves or their organizations as creative, they did speak about approaches and personal beliefs that reflected creative leadership and climate. There was much interest from participants in the project to read the outcomes and learn about the sector as it currently exists as well as ideas for moving it forward.

Leadership

In terms of leadership, I wanted to determine if the experience of leading this project could form the basis for a broader endeavour, a project that would explore Canadian examples of high impact non-profits using the *Forces for Good* methods.

A broader project remains to be planned. Given the time taken to collect, discuss and compile the information from this small sample, it is apparent that such a large undertaking would need significant time, resources and networks to be successful. A publication with Canadian content would be most valuable to those working in non-profit organizations. This project resulted in expanding my original concept of simply looking at high impact characteristics but also the need to explore the context within which non-profits operate.

Changes in Personal Leadership

I was interested in changes to my personal leadership and my leadership within the organization I currently lead in the injury prevention sector. Three questions were posed:

- What changes can/need to happen in my leadership to ensure my organization is reaching to be a high impact, highly creative organization?
- Will these changes be embraced?
- How will my relationships with these organizations be affected?

In exploring the injury prevention organizations participating, I was interested to learn about the different organizational structures they employed. The conversations were interesting and supportive, with one participant stating that those in leadership positions within injury prevention organizations across Canada need a support system of others because there are few people within the organization that can fulfill that role. Leaders in these organizations are not usually able to have discussions with staff or board members and so only those in similar positions can relate to and provide a sounding board. The reality is that those peers are located from coast to coast. The changes in my leadership to ensure my organization is striving to be a high impact, highly creative organization will take longer to evaluate. Steps have been taken to introduce creative problem solving and through sharing the books used in this project I hope the team will learn new ideas to use in their day-to-day work and interactions.

Will these changes be embraced? Change is such a difficult thing – something most would say they want but few are truly able embrace smoothly. The team I lead has

been provided with *Forces for Good* as required reading and I have strongly encouraged those who participated in this project to also read the book. While not the panacea for all of what ails injury non-profits in Canada, it certainly focuses on the non-profit sector and identifies issues that many if not all of these organizations face. Of those who have read *Forces for Good*, they have found it to be useful and a framework within which to think about their work. My hope is that my team will also see how the organization is already engaged in some of the principles of high impact non-profits and future opportunities for both individual behaviours and beliefs as well as the organization's.

My relationships with the organizations and individuals who participated in this project have been positive in the past and I expect this to remain so. As noted previously, this group of leaders has worked together for a significant time, some almost 10 years, and so most are open to discussions about topics such as this. It is a shared journey that we are all on together and one that has high stakes in terms of human life, so the drive to be successful is great.

Section Six: Conclusion

Introduction

The successful collection of rich results through the survey and interviews is one measure of evaluation. Others include the extent to which I was able to explore relevant information and be able to compare and contrast it with identified models/ theories for high impact non-profits and creativity. I believe that these outcomes have been successfully achieved. Throughout the surveys and interviews, concepts of high impact outcomes, creative problem solving, leadership and climate were found.

Combining creativity, specifically the creative climate aspect with the principles of high impact non-profits, added an interesting angle to the discussions and outcomes in terms of information. As anticipated, the leaders in non-profit organizations in the injury prevention sector are not aware of the links to creative models/theories in and of themselves, but rather as they have been integrated within business models and personal beliefs. Change leadership is successful when the leader is able to understand how to motivate people, provide enough but not too much support and is not afraid to give power away. Sounds easy but its application is anything but given the complex interaction of people.

360 Degree Feedback

In order to evaluate my role in the project, I conducted a 360 degree review from those participating in the project as well as a self-assessment. All who responded reported that while the questions did not evoke necessarily any new revelations, the process

allowed them to pause and think about the information in different ways. They thought the project was interesting and their feedback on my role was very positive. Those who participated were given the option of providing feedback from three questions or to simply write the feedback that they wanted to share with me. Most answered the questions:

1. Did the interview or survey bring to mind issues that you haven't thought of before or thought of in a different way?
2. Will you use the outcome of this project to inform your leadership in the future?
3. Was there something that was missed in the information collected?

Self-Assessment

It is much more difficult to be objective and constructive of myself than to receive feedback from others. As a well organized planner, I approached this project very pragmatically, laying out the format and timeline by working backwards from the deadline. I had already spent a considerable amount of time thinking about what I wanted to achieve so the steps were easy to identify once the overall concept was approved. I gave adequate timelines to those participating to allow them to review the interview questions beforehand and complete the surveys online. Selecting a mechanism, Google Survey, made it easy for participants to complete the surveys. Interviews were kept within the timelines projected so as not to impose on the participants who were already generous with their time.

Reviewing the results was interesting and by using the six principles as guideposts, I was able to read the information provided with an eye for words and concepts in the principles which made the analysis targeted. I used feedback from my

sounding board partner and other students who read my drafts to build the report, clarify and tighten the final version.

Allowing incubation time between the initial analysis and report write up and the final review resulted in stretching from the original analysis, finding additional connections to creativity and allowed me to read other publications that contributed to my overall perspective. Occasionally, I lapsed into passionate rants that I am not normally prone to, as I worked through this project.

Next Steps

The exploration of high impact non-profits for this project has allowed me the opportunity to read publications with information related to various aspects of non-profit organization management. One issue that has caught my attention is the disconnection between principles of operating a non-profit versus operating a business. The idea that non-profits are held to a different standard, that they should not utilize business best practices even when the organization uses them in other areas of their work and that they should not be evaluated on outcomes but rather the percentage that they use for administration. As Renée Irvin writes in her review of *Uncharitable*, “Not only must nonprofits be allowed to use the tools of commerce to thrive and accomplish their missions, Pallotta (2008) argues, but the public also needs to get over its mistaken and tenacious fixation on fundraising costs and overhead ratios.” (p. 19). I am interested to explore these issues with leaders from other non-profits, in sectors other than injury, to discuss if anyone is working to dispel these outdated myths or actually running a

successful organization without those assumptions. Of interest is also learning more about the legal context within which non-profits work in Canada. Others may build on the small sample of organizations who participated in this project and expand out to additional organizations in the injury prevention sector or to other non-profit organizations.

My interest in the broader non-profit context in Canada has been sparked. The disconnection between the logic of using tools that are successful for corporations but not for charities is vast. Dan Pallotta (2009) sums it up as “the sick and the poor are dying of quaint gestures. Do we really think it is comforting to the mother of a child who has just died of bird flu to be told that at least no one earned a profit in the failed effort to save her son?” (Pallotta, 2009, p. 11). On a positive note, “talent is now migrating between the non-profit and for-profit sectors and coordination and collaboration between the two will grow and be critical, along with engagement of public sector resources that are the foundation of financial support for many organizations in the non-profit sector.” (Golden, Hewitt, Lewkowitz, McBane & Torjman, 2009, p. 10). And even closer to home, The Toronto Star newspaper ran an exclusive on April 23, 2010 with a story headline “Ontario seeks bigger role for charities”. The article goes on to announce that “Queen’s Park is launching a major push to revamp the Ontario non-profit sector to boost charities, foundations and volunteer organizations.” (p. 4). The new initiative, announced in a recent Throne Speech, reports that “Open Ontario will develop new ways to strengthen the non-profit sector – recognizing that in a time of more limited resources, we all need to

work together to move our province forward.” The hope will be that concepts such as those put forward by Dan Pallotta will be considered part of this initiative.

At the end of this project there remains still more questions. How can we support non-profits to be high impact in order to address society’s most pressing issues? How can we influence the system within which these non-profits work so they have all the tools possible? What role can creativity and creative problem-solving play in supporting non-profits to leverage their most value resource of all - people?

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Section Seven: Appendices

Appendix A
Executive Director Interview Questions

Taken from *Forces for Good, Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008*

1. When you first founded or joined your organization, what was your big vision? How close to realizing that are you today?
2. What do you see as your organization's most significant outcomes or impact?
3. What are your goals for scaling out your impact further in the next five to ten years?
4. What would you say are the top five factors that have contributed to your organization's success at scaling out its impact to such a significant level?
5. Considering the factors that you listed above, how would you rank those factors?
6. How did your organization make key decisions around growth and scaling impact?
7. How did your organization manage the need to raise operating funds year to year while continuing to pursue your long-term vision and make investments for the future?
8. Please describe an instance in which your organization tried to advance its impact but failed.
9. What would you say are the primary factors that distinguish your organization from others?
10. How would you characterize your own leadership style, and what do you see as your strengths and weaknesses, both at founding and currently (if different)?
11. Are there any questions you wished had been asked but weren't?

Appendix B General Organization Survey

Taken from *Forces for Good, Crutchfield & McLeod Grant, 2008*

I. Mission, Vision, Strategy: What does the organization do and how does it do it?

- a) Mission and Vision Statements: What are they?
- b) Founding History: Who started the organization and why?
- c) Business Model: What is the organization's business model?
- d) Strategy: How does the organization execute its strengths and weaknesses?
- e) Customers/Stakeholders: Who is the target market the organization aims to serve?

II. Impact, Outcomes: How does this organization think about its own impact?

- a) General: What is the organization's "theory of changes"?
- b) Measurement/Evaluation: How does the organization measure the impact it is having?

III. Organization, structure: How is the non-profit organized?

- a) Sites/Affiliates: What is the overall size/scope of the organization?
- b) Structure: What is the current organizational structure?
- c) Growth: Was the original model designed "to scale" or was this an afterthought?
- d) Staff/HR: How many staff work for the organization, and where are they based? What are the salary ranges, turnover rates, general policies?
- e) Culture: How does the organization characterize and/or manage its culture?

IV. Leadership: What role has leadership played in this organization?

- a) Founder/Executive: How many executives has the organization had?
- b) Senior Management: What are the important management positions and turnover?
- c) Governance: How many board members does the organization have? What is the board's role?

V. Budget, financing: How does the organization support its work?

- a) Budget: How has the organization grown financially – inflection points?
- b) Sources of Funding: How does the organization support its activities.

VI. Program, Operations: What does the organization do?

- a) Activities/Programs: What are the most important program areas?
- b) Operations/Program: Are there any critical processes?
- c) Systems/Information Technology: How deliberate is this organization about its systems and processes?

VII. Marketing, Public Relations

- a) Marketing: To whom do they communicate? How and through what channels?
- b) Media/Communications: How deliberate is the organization about its public relations/communications strategy?

Appendix C

Creative Climate Survey

Basis for survey taken from *The creative climate: Its determinants and effects at a Swedish University*. Ekvall & Ryhammer, 1999.

1. To what degree do you feel challenged to complete tasks, goals and operations in your organization?
2. To what degree do employees have opportunities to take the initiative?
3. To what degree are employees encouraged and/or rewarded for new ideas?
4. To what degree are employees trusted and feel that trust?
5. To what degree is there is a permissive environment with frequent discussion and debate (but no actual animosity)?
6. To what degree is risk taking supported?
7. To what degree is there organization integration?
8. To what degree is the Mission of the organization clear?

Appendix D Concept Paper

Title of Project:

Canadian Injury Prevention Organizations: High Impact, Highly Creative?

Name: Pamela Fuselli

Submitted: January 25, 2010

Project Type (Develop a Skill/Talent or Use a Skill/Talent to Improve the Quality of Life for Others) Use a Skill/Talent to Improve the Quality of Life for Others

Section One

Purpose and Description of Project:

Public sector organizations, specifically those dealing with knowledge as their 'product', are assumed to function on different principles than organizations in the private sector. They do not create new gadgets or widgets nor do they operate for the purposes of generating profits. They are 'more than profits' for certainly surpluses are welcome and needed. Knowledge organizations that focus on the prevention of injuries in the non-profit world are often held to standards beyond those expected of private sector companies. Sponsors are interested in the outcomes, but not necessarily in investing in the expertise which creates the outcomes. Administrative expenses above a certain percentage are considered a misuse of funding instead of an investment in excellence. Profits are not a consideration but the value of the non-profit work is usually worth more than the dollars exchanged. This difference in standards is most unfair and the expectations misplaced. It places extreme pressure on non-profits to operate only covering their costs and rather than sustainability over time

In reality, public sector non-profits are an invaluable part of society, augmenting what governments are able to provide. It is important that as many as possible are enabled to increased their impact. Measurements of engagement, validated with private sector organizations, can be turned on their heads because the individuals who choose to work in these organizations are willing to forgo the oft perceived essentials of engagement, such as equipment, in return for being involved with work that fulfills a need to contribute and is meaningful. These organizations operate with processes that closely mirror those attributes of a skilled facilitator (cite- Schwartz?). They are more often

tested by resource restraints and leverage the “creativity” of staff on a day-to-day basis in order to overcome the challenges of cash flow in order to achieve the greater good.

This project proposes to look at knowledge non-profits in the injury prevention sector in Canada by using the survey validated in Forces for Good research and characteristics of creativity and change leadership. The Executive Director Interview questions and General Organization survey will be used along with a survey that will be created to assess the creative environment of the organization. The Executive Director Interview will be conducted with the leader of each organization, the General Organization survey will be completed by the leader or a designate and the creative environment survey will be completed by staff from each organization.

Rationale for Selection:

Non-profits, or more-than-profits, occupy a unique place in the business community. In fact, many would not see these organizations as businesses at all. Non-profits do not represent a sector that has been studied in terms of creativity, creative problem-solving or thinking skills, although they have been the subject of study in terms of societal impact and value, specifically in the United States. There is an important gap that could be filled through exploration of non-profit organizations in Canada in terms of what has been shown to be high impact as well as high creativity.

I am in a leadership role within this sector and have been frustrated with the lack of exploration and information in the Canadian context that could move the dial in terms of the legitimacy of non-profits taking a business approach to be high impact organizations as well as being held up as models for creativity.

Section Two

Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources:

Literature

Collins, J. (2001). *Good to great*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Crutchfield, L. & McLeod Grant, H. (2008). *Forces for good*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons

Gladwell, M. (2009). *What the dog saw*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.

Gladwell, M. (2002). *The tipping point*. New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company.

Martin, R. (2007). *The opposable mind*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Maxwell, J. C. (2007). *The 21 irrefutable laws of leadership*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson.

Puccio, G.J., Murdock, M.C., & Mance, M. (2007). *Creative leadership: Skills that drive change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Productions.

Westely, F. (2007). *Getting to maybe*. Toronto, ON: Random House of Canada.

Currently looking up articles recently published...

Key People

Allyson Hewitt, Director, Social Entrepreneurship, MaRS Discovery District

Leslie Crutchfield, Author, Forces for Good

Section Three

How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?

Beginning with the Forces for Good high impact non-profit's survey, I then need to identify and integrate creativity indicators into the survey/interview process. A review of CPS and other theories related to creative leadership will be required. Once that is complete, the survey process will begin by obtaining agreement from eight non-profit injury prevention organizations from across Canada including provincial and national level organizations. Sharing creativity theories and models with the non-profits will be key in exchanging important information.

Prepare Project Timeline:

January

- Develop survey tool that includes creativity-specific questions
- Consult with Allyson Hewitt & Leslie Crutchfield

February

- Disseminate survey
- Follow up, modify if needed

March

- Evaluate results
- Conduct evaluations – others and self

April

- Write up final report

Section Four

What will be the Tangible Product(s) or Outcomes?

The goal is to add value and inform the non-profit injury prevention sector in Canada by providing a measurement/evaluation of the level of creativity and high impact characteristics it possesses as well as recommendations about potential improvements. Does the application of creativity theories and model result in different outcomes in public sector/non-profit organizations compared with private sector/for-profit companies? This project will explore the tools and models that are used in organizations involved with the prevention of injuries in Canada by using a survey validated in the Forces for Good publication. These organizations are public sector/non-profits that have operated for more than 10 years. This information will be analyzed in comparison with the theories and models put forward by creativity experts to determine similarities and differences between theory and real world application.

Objectives

- To explore evidence to ascertain what is considered to be best practices for high impact non-profits.
- To compare and contrast the best practices for high impact non-profits with models that enhance creativity in organizations.
- To formulate a hypothesis that combines best practices for high impact non-profits with creativity models and evaluate a pool of injury prevention non-profits in Canada against this hypothesis.

Results

A model that would outline the characteristics of non-profits that are both high impact and creative, using Canadian organizations in the field of injury prevention as a pilot.

Section Five

Personal Learning Goals:

Creativity

- Improve my skill in identifying examples of real world application of creativity principles.
- Can I find them in action? Will the survey on creative environment measure what I intend it to measure?
- If I can find them, are those engaged in the activities aware that what they are doing is creative theory?

Leadership

- Determine if I lead this project through to the broader endeavour of a project that would explore Canadian examples of high impact non-profits using the Forces for Good methods

Change

- What changes can/need to happen in my leadership to ensure my organization is reaching to be a high impact, highly creative organization?
- Will these changes be embraced?
- How will my relationships with these organizations be affected?

What Criteria Will You Use To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Achievement?

I recognize that this project is the beginning of a larger endeavour and the project will be the initial investigation. This project will simply apply the validated survey from high impact non-profits used in the U.S. and compare them with creative thinking and creative problem-solving characteristics. Ultimately, I am interested in being involved with a larger, Canada-wide project that would assess a broader sample of non-profits with the high impact characteristics AND creativity theory, something that would expand the initial research in the U.S. Did my project identify evidence to ascertain what is considered to be best practices for high impact non-profits.

- Development of criteria that compare and contrast the best practices for high impact non-profits with models that enhance creativity in organizations.
- Did I formulate a hypothesis that combines best practices for high impact non-profits with creativity models?
- Was I able to evaluate a pool of injury prevention non-profits in Canada against this hypothesis?

Evaluation:

The successful collection of rich results through the survey and interviews is one measure of evaluation. The extent to which I am able to gather relevant information and be able to compare and contrast it with identified models/theories for high impact non-profits and creativity will provide feedback on the success of the project.

In order to evaluate my role in the project, I will conduct a 360 degree review from those participating in the project as well as a self-assessment.

Permission to place this Project online as part of the International Center for Studies resources.

I hereby grant permission to the International Center for Studies in Creativity at Buffalo State college permission to place a digital copy of this master's Project (*Canadian Injury Prevention Organizations in Canada: High Impact, Highly Creative?*) in an online resource.



Pamela Fuselli

May 2, 2010

Date