

**Foundation Administrators Network Meeting:  
A Focus on Human Resources, TED Style**

**Thursday, July 18, 2013**

**Summary Notes**

*Prepared by Carrie Ortiz, FAN Co-Chair*

Welcome & introduction led by Amy Driver. She requested everyone to form small groups and discuss if they had to give a TED topic what would they talk about. We then shared with the group.

Gail Pesyna welcomed the panel of HR leaders. Diana Davenport, The Commonwealth Fund, would be discussing “*Hiring as the most important step in creating a successful and satisfied employee*”; Samantha Gilbert, The Rockefeller Foundation, “*Establishing and embedding core organizational values*”; and, Lisa Cribari, Ford Foundation, “*Importance of feedback in transforming organizations*”.

*Each presenter prepared a handout. The following are additional summary notes of the TED talks.*

1. Diana began with outlining how she formulized the hiring process at the Fund. Crucial to be very honest about menial tasks that may be expected (saying them 3 times) for entry level positions and whether or not they can lead to growth opportunities. Must have clear and detailed job descriptions so the entire recruiting team involved understands what is asked of the interviewee. She always asks for writing samples and transcripts, and creates tests for candidates that reflect the type of work the position requires. The interview process is a reflection on the candidate. Always ask the interviewee what makes them right for the job.

After hired, there is a three month survey process including discussing the hiring process and how it could be improved; does the employee feel oriented properly.

Exit interviews are also conducted when an employee leaves discussing room for improvement with the position as well as any issue that arise during their tenure.

2. Samantha began with a presentation and stressed the importance of creating a values driven culture. Define the organizations values and discussing why they are important, which builds a sense of clarity for all staff members. She continued on how to identify the values by using the ‘Top Down’ (founder driven) or ‘Bottom Up’ (long established or new organizations) methods. The top-down approach has the leader articulating the culture. Bottom-up engages staff through workshops to help identify what the values are for the organization. HR team tries to identify what those behaviors look like. Reinforce values through visual reminders around the office. Must provide clear definitions of values and what behaviors represent those values. Samantha also spoke about how the values of the organization can build community.
3. Lisa spoke about the important of feedback and making it impactful. Surveys are essential to receiving feedback and the input can transform the culture of an organization. Surveys can hold supervisors accountable. If the culture is oriented towards feedback, the staff and supervisor will be comfortable with it. It will create momentum as well. How to give feedback and how to receive feedback are important so that you can get valuable information and see what went well. Helping managers with balanced feedback technique, sometimes called a “feedback sandwich”. The sandwich is constructed by sandwiching a negative between two positives. Other ways to provide feedback by coaching and mentoring. Mentoring is sharing what you know and providing

navigational advice. Coaching provides techniques to unlock potential and enable an individual. The GROW model (or process) is a technique for problem solving or goal setting attributed to Sir John Whitmore. If it is successful it will permit the supervisor to work on higher level tasks.

TED talks were followed by group discussion on the following topics:

- Hiring practices:
  - When you are at the point of five candidates, be very frank about your recommendation as an HR professional to other members of the hiring team.
  - Hiring the wrong person costs money.
  - Succession planning for all positions.
  - HR Committees at foundations.
  - Performance reviews.
  - Clear job descriptions.
  - Center for Effective Philanthropy is a resource for employee satisfaction surveys.
- Values:
  - When you engage staff on core values, make sure they are values that exist today and/or staff can aspire to. Building values for a small staff in a meaningful way through dialog and team exercises. Exercises include staff all over the world. Recognize that values may play out differently in different cultures.
  - Informally is the best way to measure if it is aligned with values.
  - Engaged dialog and defining organization values. How do you engage the CEO in these conversations? Staff perception: Actual vs. real problems when compare to other foundations.
  - Is senior staff really engaged and ready to take on this issue?
  - Employee engagement survey.
  - Focus on what is good.
- Feedback:
  - How do you conceive of surveys for smaller organizations? Suggestion: engage an independent consultant or external facilitator to conduct one on one interviews.
  - Take the time to give feedback.
  - Deliver it effectively.
  - Training staff to receive feedback/Provide guidance to take feedback.
  - Sensitize staff to help them with their growth and development.
  - Frame the feedback. What did you do really well this year? What could you have done better? Give a feedback sandwich!
  - Feedback is a gift; feedback empowers staff.
  - Coaching and mentoring are critical.
  - Fear that information can “weaponize” something.
  - If there is tension, talk it through.