Developmental Needs of Non-Profit Senior Managers and Leaders: A Study of Training Needs in the Non-Profit Sector in Galway

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About this Study
This research identifies the training and developmental needs of senior leaders and managers from 115 non-profit organisations in Galway City and County.

A competency framework was derived from existing literature in the field, combining the competencies cited as critical for effective management and leadership of both non-profit and for-profit organisations (see Figure 1).

This framework was used to assess current capabilities of non-profit senior managers and leaders in order to determine the existing collective training and developmental needs for the group.

Importance of this Study
Senior managers in non-profit organisations need to continue with professional development if their organisations are to be efficient, effective and drive change.

Currently, there is a lack of research into the collective training needs of senior managers and leaders in non-profit organisations.

This research has already had a practical application as training for the non-profit sector in late 2015 has been sourced based on its findings.

Data Collected
The research combines both quantitative and qualitative data.

Questionnaires were sent to 589 non-profit organisations in Galway. The number of valid responses received was 115, giving a valid response rate of 20%.

Respondents were asked to assess the importance of each competency area and the current skill levels in each competency area.

Key Findings
The competencies tested in the study were confirmed as key skills required of senior managers and leaders in the organisations studied.

There are training and developmental needs across all of the competencies included in this study.

In particular, there are developmental requirements in the areas of managing effective operations, directing the organisation and marketing capabilities.

Specifically, the areas of greatest need are in raising and managing funds, having strategic goals to help achieve organisational vision, and maximising marketing potential.
Implications and Recommendations

Non-profit organisations are suffering as a result of a lack of Leadership and Management Development provisions.

Training and development needs should be prioritised, primarily in the areas of most need.

Government funding should be made available to facilitate development – non-profit organisations are under constant financial pressure.

Lack of skilled human resource professionals and time are reported as barriers to training and development in the non-profit sector.

Training needs across the whole sector must be identified to facilitate sector growth.

Figure 1: Non-Profit Senior Leader and Manager Competency Framework

Facilitator of HR
- Encouraging group interaction and teamwork
- Facilitating open communication among staff
- Involving all staff in problem-solving and decision-making

Mentor Role
- Supporting staff through leading by example
- Empowering staff and delegating
- Encouraging the learning and development of staff

Change Management
- Displays Creativity/Innovative thinking
- Flexibility
- Strategic Planning

Facilitator of HR
- Raising required funds from a variety of sources and managing them effectively
- Managing time
- Measuring and documenting organisational performance

Director Role
- Having a vision for the future of the organisation
- Having strategic goals to help achieve the vision
- Providing structure and managing organisational culture

Networking
- Communication skills
- Initiating networking opportunities
- Building relationships with others in both the non-profit and for-profit sectors

Marketing
- Managing organisational image
- Maximising marketing potential
- Keeping up-to-date with changes in technology

Professionalism
- Managing conflict
- Co-ordinating operations
- Maintaining integrity and accountability