Collaboration Partners – Social Impact Consultants

Horizons for Youth – Case Study

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Horizons for Youth– Executive Summary

We recommended an optimal governance structure aligned with objectives and constraints to more effectively achieve HFY's organizational goals.

Our Client

Horizons for Youth (HFY) is a shelter for at-risk and homeless youth in Toronto. Its mandate is to provide youth with the support they need to escape the cycle of poverty and leave the streets behind. In addition to providing shelter and meals to its clients, the Organization also offers support to past residents and provides its clients with the opportunity to attend workshops and field trips. In 2019, HFY's dedicated staff and 300+ volunteers were able to directly support 365 at-risk youth.

The Challenge

Horizons for Youth was seeking Collaboration Partners' assistance to perform an assessment of its governance model as the Organization had identified challenges with the efficiency of its Board of Directors. We identified the following objectives for our engagement:
- Perform a current state assessment of the Organization's governance model to advise on possible changes to the structure of the Board
- Provide recommendations to better define Board Members' roles and responsibilities
- Identify evaluation tools that could be implemented to improve accountability

The Impact We Created

Horizons for Youth was able to understand the issues with its current state and possible options to restructure its governance structure to achieve their targets. We supported the Organization by:

- Reviewing key organizational documents; and interviewing staff and members of the Board
- Performing independent research to identify leading practices followed by other non-profit organizations
- Recommending an optimal governance structure aligned with objectives and constraints
- Developing a 5-step implementation plan with supporting tools, frameworks, and resources to guide the organization towards the achievement of its desired state

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Detailed Approach

To achieve the agreed-upon objectives, our project team (1 Engagement Manager & 3 consultants) divided the project into two phases:

Phase One: Current State Assessment

Determined the effectiveness of the existing Board governance structure in supporting the Organization's achievement of its vision and identified potential gaps.

Key Activities:
- Reviewed key organizational documents and interviewed staff and members of the Board in order to understand current pain points, strategic priorities, roles and responsibilities, and organizational policies

Outcomes and Deliverables:
- Current state assessment, including gap analysis, and final presentation to leadership team

Phase Two: Define Future Governance Model

Leveraged internal knowledge and insights gathered through independent research to suggest opportunities to restructure the Board, redefine roles and responsibilities, and streamline processes between Board and leadership team

Key Activities:
- Performed independent research to identify leading practices followed by other non-profit organizations
- Identified and documented key components of a future state governance model
- Identified tools that could be leveraged to evaluate Board performance and effectiveness of new governance structure

Outcomes and Deliverables:
- Stakeholder alignment on proposed future state governance model
- Actionable implementation plan for leadership team to act on recommendations

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