

Association Management Services

2006-10-03 12:26:08

Non-profit associations often grow too large to be run solely by their volunteers but are still too small to hire a full time manager. Enter the association manager; this enterprising individual performs management services for several associations at one time, handling tasks including marketing, fund raising, administration and organisation.

Before The Start-Up, Let's Not Get Ahead Of Ourselves

When seeking out a manager, associations are looking for someone who they can trust an array of duties to, all of which hold great responsibility. While they might not necessarily be looking for a manager who's run an association before they will be looking for someone with managerial and administrative experience along with a little organizational and marketing genius.

The Start-Up

Managing associations requires a well thought out and complete office setup. You'll need a work space, desk, computer, telephone (cell phone is always handy but not essential), internet connection, copier, fax and scanner. Although you'll be representing others you'll still need to do your own marketing so business stationary including business cards, a letterhead and a quote and invoice template are essential.

Managing local associations in your immediate vicinity is convenient for both the association and yourself, so keep it local and cut down on the kilometres travelled. In the early stages of your service start small with one or two clients, when you feel comfortable and have a better feel for the typical tasks required you can begin to take on more clients.

Making It Work

Associations are not only going to rely on you to keep their organization running smoothly. They'll likely expect you to grow their membership and increase their exposure. Learning how to market an association on the cheap will be your key to success. Starting an association blog or small website can be a great way to attract new members while increasing service levels to existing customers.

Several free blogging services exist on the net such as Wordpress and Blogger. Alternatively many web design firms offer discounts for non profit organisations. Once your website is established consider selling advertising space on its pages too offset hosting and design costs.

Marketing

When starting out you'll need to be thinking about two avenues of marketing. You'll firstly need to market your own services. Advertise in local classifieds and directly approach local associations to offer your services. Marketing the associations you represent will be a bigger challenge, be prepared to stretch a small budget as far as possible. A website discussed above is a very effective marketing tool; also consider classified advertisements and flyers and posters.

Don't Forget

Volunteers who work for associations are savvy people; they'll often try take advantage of your services and knowledge. Charge a monthly retainer to ensure your time is sufficiently paid for. Don't

forget you're running a profit enterprise and be careful with how much free assistance you provide.