



April 2007 - Volume 12, No. 4

Should Your Organizational Culture Be Changed?

Conflict resides in every organization and it doesn't stop outside the volunteer office door.

According to Michael Daily, executive director, Executive Services Corps of NH (Atkinson, NH), while some organizations thrive on healthy, open discussions and debate, other agencies may have volunteers with hidden agendas, backbiting, and intrigue. Daily says there is where the problem lies.

"These organizations spend a lot of energy on unresolved issues that are counterproductive to organizational process," he says. "As a leader it is important to try and move your organization to the model where if no consensus can be reached, issues are elevated to management and a decision is made."

Daily says it's important to not let your volunteers become a "debate society" characterized by all talk and no resolution. "Set a good example by using open communication. Self deprecating humor is a useful tool and sharing examples of less than perfect situations from organizational or personal history can create trust."

When handling volunteer conflict, Daily suggests seeking input from all parties in volunteer meetings, not being judgmental, and if someone appears at odds with the group, probe to give the members a better understanding of why.

"When we are dealing with volunteers we need to be more proactive, because they are often not as invested in the organization as employees, and they may vote with their feet," says Daily.

Source: Michael Daily, Executive Director, Executive Service Corps of NH, 10 Emery Dr., Atkinson, NH 03811. Phone (603) 362-9300. E-mail: Michael@nonprofit-consultants.org. Website: www.nonprofit-consultants.org