

To: Jean Hocker, President of the Land Trust Alliance
From: Jeff Shields, Mission Consultants
Subject: ICT and Expansion of the Land Trust Alliance

Background and Context of LTA Issues

Since the inception of the Land Trust Alliance (LTA), your organization has been faced with continuing expansion in the Land Trust Movement. According to the National Land Trust Census, land trusts have increased from 750 groups in 1988 to 1,200 in 1999. As a result of this expansion, millions of acres of land have been protected in the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. The perseverance of the LTA during this period of growth shows that this organization has the ability to adapt and change with the times. It is also a credit to your mission as a leader in land conservation.

Currently the LTA is facing some important issues, which partly stem from the ever-expanding number of land trusts. More and more people are seeking answers to questions on starting and operating land trusts. Also, there is an increasing public need for information on land conservation methods, especially in areas where public policy is not sufficient (Brewer, 2005). Due to this growing need, the LTA administration has decided to expand its offices in order to reach out more to the land trust community. However, it is essential to consider whether the organization itself is adaptable to the current expansion. The LTA's mission will depend on how well you are able to administer during this transitional phase.

In today's world more information than ever is available to the public due to technological innovations like the Internet and various information communication technologies (ICT) (Thompson, 2007). It is important for the LTA to stay up to date with these technologies in order to meet the increasing expectations of society (Fischer, 1978). The LTA has already found that their web-based and internal ICT services are in need of some changes, which has affected their ability to share information; this has prompted the LTA to make improvements on

these technologies. Again, the abilities of the LTA's administration, staff, and members will play a large role in making this building process a success.

Introduction

In reviewing these environmental issues and the current state of the LTA, I recognize that you are, in many ways, right on track in terms of the managerial and technological planning procedure taking place. However, I recommend that you consider some other forms of analysis for your organization, in terms of its operational/financial capacity and its readiness for expansion.

Specifically, it is important that you take into account the opinions of members, staff, and other key stakeholders regarding organizational growth (Bolman & Deal, 2003). At the same time, it is vital that you sufficiently plan for these changes in terms of your budgetary development, examining anticipated costs, benefits, and means of sustainability. Furthermore, I recommend that you explore the essential components of the LTA personnel, especially in the area of information services. Human resources is an often overlooked aspect of organizational change and you must make certain that any staff issues are resolved before moving into uncharted territory (Daley, 2002). Lastly, if the LTA is to move forward effectively with its expansion and put in place new technologies, you must properly measure and communicate your accomplishments. This is essential as you strive to lead the LTA in its expansion efforts (Kotter, 2007).

The LTA is an organization that serves 700 formal members and countless other land trust volunteers and workers who benefit from the LTA's events, resources, and guidance. The purpose of this correspondence is to ensure a clear understanding of the LTA's issues in context with key public administrative concepts, helping the LTA continue accomplishing its mission on the scenic path of its vision.

Discussion of LTA Issues

The LTA is approaching some important organizational developments amidst, not only widespread industry growth, but also modern technological advancements. According to Hoogervorst, Koopman, & Van der Flier (2002) industries exist today in a “Digital” and “Information Age,” which affects the way in which organizations structure and manage themselves. In this “Age” it is as important to organize information, as it is to acquire it (Thompson, 2007). At the same time, organizational successes often depend on how well technologies are maintained and, better yet, advanced (Fischer, 1978).

Sharing and Transmitting Information

As you know a preliminary review from both Forrester Research and the Technology Development Corporation revealed that the LTA is not currently providing an adequate or user-friendly web site service for their members or its staff. Few members visit the web site and many are unaware that it even exists. In addition, findings from the technology consultant, John McComb, show that the internal information infrastructure is in need of vast improvements. With respect to the growth in the “Information Age” and the developments in technology, it has become clear to the LTA that it is in need of some updating (Thompson, 2007). However, in addressing these apparent issues, it is also important to think about whether these changes are feasible from a financial standpoint. Has the LTA thoroughly analyzed the costs and benefits associated with technological changes?

These problems are affecting the mission of land conservation at the LTA. Functions like donation submission, staff-member communication, and general land trust information inquiries, which are key to LTA subsistence and operational efficiency, are not operating effectively because of problems with the web site and information services. Essentially, LTA members are not visiting the web site, and this is due to the fact that it is not meeting their needs or

expectations. Also, within the organization employees are having difficulties sharing information due to preexisting databases that are not compatible with each other. These types of communication issues are often detrimental to the performance of organizations and can lead to dramatic problems in the future (Eggers & Goldsmith, 2004).

Meanwhile, LTA members are looking elsewhere for information, as they frequent Internet forums like the “landtrust” listserv, an independent online/discussion group. LTA members belong to this listserv, which allows them to interact with each other regarding current land trust issues. The fact that 600 of your 700 members are visiting this online web service tells us that, for the most part, members are taking advantage of Internet services to answer their land trust questions, and that the LTA is right to think that their ICT and web site can better serve the organization’s mission. However, to what extent will the LTA tolerate technological change internally? Has enough research been gathered on members’ support for the new goals that you outline in the “Strategic Directions?”

Changing Work Environment and Organizational Support

Current issues with the LTA stem from you and the Board’s decision to implement expansive changes, moving to a larger organizational framework. Increased offices and more advanced technologies will necessitate an increase in personnel and skills, changing the environment of the LTA as a whole. Already the dynamic within the organization has been altered with the introduction of outside consultants.

John McComb has been entrusted with the task of creating a system that will potentially house a significant amount of sensitive information (i.e. budget, financial, and personnel info). In addition, key activities like fundraising, event planning, and general communication, will be dependent on this ICT system. Once this consultant has left, it may be difficult for permanent

employees to manage and utilize this system if the organization is overly dependent on John McComb or not accustomed to these changes (Adler, 2003). Also, employees who do not have, or wish to learn, these ICT skills may feel threatened (Due, 1992). How do you plan to prepare the organization for these changes?

With this kind of organizational change there is often resistance from those who prefer the ways of old (Bolman & Deal, 2003). According to Bolman & Deal (2003) it is essential, during these periods of change, to be aware of any warning signs that may indicate a brewing resistance pattern. In the past the LTA has been successful in meeting the needs of land trusts and its members. However, with its expansion, this will potentially create a wider gap between members and staff as office locations change and more personal forms of communication are replaced with technological systems.

An important point to consider in this expansion is the effect it will have on the needs of staff and members. The effectiveness of an organization depends on satisfying the needs of its components (Morgan, 2006). As the LTA expands, its members and staff will grow in diversity, making it more difficult to maintain a truly representative organization (Denhardt & Grubbs, 2003). For example, through the years the Rally event has continually attracted various types of land trust interests, which is notable because this shows that they are achieving their mission. However, this growth has also attracted more diverse members with varying levels of experience. With additional growth in the organization as a whole, you can expect this trend to continue.

The LTA is expanding; the number of regional offices is increasing, while the central headquarters in Washington D.C. is moving to a larger facility. With the help of Phil Jones, Vice President of Operations, and John McComb, the LTA is also centralizing their internal

information infrastructure. This growth stems from the LTA's apparent need to adapt to the developing external environment of the Land Trust Movement ("A Note on Essentiality...", 1990). It also shows that it is moving towards a more coordinated effort as it creates a central link between the various offices, creating a better system for sharing information (Eggers & Goldsmith, 2004). Assuming that organizational growth is the right choice for the LTA, these are important steps in its expansion.

Management Turnover

A key component that is missing at the LTA is a manager of Information Services. The recent opening of this position leaves a significant gap in personnel at the LTA. This is especially problematic because one of the more pressing objectives at the LTA is to centralize their internal information infrastructure. Currently, you have Andy Zepp, Vice President for Programs, and Phil Jones, Vice President of Operations, overextended on this project, working tirelessly to ensure a smooth transition. You have hired an outside technology consultant to help develop this system (John McComb), but you are missing what could be an important managerial/leadership tool in the decision-making process. Meanwhile, the day-to-day decisions in Information Services are being performed without a legitimate manager.

Without the Information Services manager during this building stage, you are taking away possibilities for collaboration. Collaboration is a proven method for developing ideas, especially during times of uncertainty and change (Cameron & Lavine, 2006). The Vice President of Operations is working with an outside consultant who is there to assist in setting up the system. Unfortunately, the manager who will be working with aspects of this technology in the future is not there to give potentially useful feedback on the current needs of Information Services.

According to Daley (2002) turnover time can have a strong impact on the productivity of an organization. Also, the longer it takes to hire someone, especially in a managerial position, the higher the potential financial costs for the LTA (Snell, 2007). The extent of this turnover time will depend on the quality of recruitment (Hays & Kearny, 2003). However, this period of turnover is likely to have an affect on the LTA, which is important to think about as you implement steps towards expansion.

Missing Budget Analyses

In planning for changes at the LTA, the National Land Trust Council, the technology consultant, and the Technology Development Corporation (TDC) have performed analyses in terms of the organization's objectives, goals, technological needs, and management needs. Included in the TDC's "business plan" was an envisioned budget of \$6 million dollars for 2003 (a sixty eight percent increase). With this expansion, naturally there is significantly more risk from a budgetary standpoint (Dropkin & Latouche, 1998). Dropkin & Latouche (1998) note that budgetary analyses are necessary to determine the immediate and long-term financial health of an organization.

In the "business plan" the TDC performed a detailed set of final projections from fiscal year 2000 to 2003. However, there is nothing specific on how the LTA plans to analyze this budgetary information as the organization grows, which is problematic in terms of accountability and financial sustainability. Assuming that the TDC included a total income projection and specific objects of expenditures, it would be beneficial for them to further analyze this information (Johnson, & Joyce, & Lee, 2008).

Findings from interviews conducted by the TDC with LTA members, imply that members would support an increase in membership dues. However, these results do not

specifically show how these increases would actually factor into the budget. Also, it is dangerous to generalize that members would accept paying more in dues without a clear validation method. These results are based on open-ended interview questions, which enable respondents to elaborate on perceived issues, enabling the researcher to note reoccurring patterns. (Berner, O'Sullivan, & Rassel, 2003); but they do not offer quantifiable evidence. This kind of assumption, if false, could compromise membership trust, which is essential in sustaining the land trust network (Eggers & Goldsmith, 2004).

Overall, it would be difficult to extrapolate from this analysis on what the funding of expansion would mean for the organization because the budgetary information has not been evaluated (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008). Revenue sources and needs are addressed in the "Strategic Directions," but neither this document nor the TCD's "Business Plan" show a concrete strategy explaining how donations and membership dues would be able to match the new costs of expansion. One can hope with expansion that this would attract additional members and potential donor sources, but as of yet there is no plan for creating this outcome.

It is also important to think in terms of the economy, examining or predicting future economic conditions that may affect the organization's growth (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008). In looking at past and current trends of the Land Trust Movement, development of the LTA would seem to be compatible. However, with public or nonprofit administration it is important to be aware of the potential for extreme circumstances, which can drastically change the playing field; preparing for uncertainties is crucial (Kettl, 2002). Further analysis can help protect the LTA from the unknown.

LTA issues in a Public Administrative Context

Organizational/Leadership Behavior

Key public administrative concepts for you to consider in addressing some of the issues at the LTA are organizational and leadership behavior. In planning for possible LTA expansion you cannot avoid issues with organizational growth and change. Organizational change is often a problem for organizations, depending on how well they can maneuver in a fluid environment (Fischer, 1978). Morgan (2006) notes, in organizational change, that the environment should not be analyzed as a separate entity because it is interconnected with the purpose of the organization. Organizations are constantly evolving, which means that managers and staff should be constantly learning about their place in the environment (Morgan, 2006).

The LTA has made some serious decisions, which will potentially create significant changes in the size and complexity of the organization's personnel, capital, technology, and inter-group dynamics (Hunsaker, 2004). With this growth it will be more difficult to interpret the organizational system of the LTA within the expanding land trust movement (Hunsaker, 2004). Part of the mission at the LTA is to research, understand, and teach members good practices in the Land Trust Movement. The extent to which the LTA continues to teach their members will affect how members perceive the organization. More importantly, successful change will depend on members' ability to learn (Senge, 1990).

A thriving organization often has members who are well skilled and knowledgeable. However, when an organization is growing or changing, members must be taught how to change (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Organizational change implies that there will be differences in how a given organization functions, and it would be a mistake to assume that members will know how to change (Bolman & Deal, 2003). For instance, with new technological systems being put in place at the LTA, you should expect issues with both staff and membership adjustment.

According to Kotter (2007) having a leader who can direct people in the right direction, will help in this process.

Leadership behavior is a central concept involved in organizational change (Heifetz, 1994). Kotter (2007) notes that there are a number of factors that a leader must keep in mind when calling for change. One of them is communication, which both leaders and organizations must establish in order to inform members about potential change (Kotter, 2007). Conveniently, the LTA already has means of communication like the Exchange magazine, the Rally event, regular meetings and conferences, and a web site that can potentially help leaders facilitate this process. However, if there is no sense of urgency or need for change, it will likely fail (Kotter, 2007). The leader as well as the organization as a whole must be adaptable enough to carry out the change (Heifetz, 1994). At the LTA they must be able to manage a larger organization with more advanced technologies.

According to Northouse (2004) a leader must be able to influence and guide the group in pursuit of specific goals. However, long-term goals often deflate motivation within groups because the ends are perceived as distant and unattainable (Kotter, 2007). The ability of a leader to motivate members and staff is based on how well they can connect with them (Qubein, 2001). The LTA is having difficulties sharing information amongst staff and members, which has created some degree of disconnect. Leaders will need this connection to help members and staff identify with the goals and objectives of the organization, thus creating a more motivated work environment (Qubein, 2001).

The President and the Board of the LTA ultimately made the decision to move into the planning phase to expand the organization and improve information services. However, the members, donors, community residents, government officials, and other potential stakeholders

will also be impacted by this decision. In engaging in the process of organizational decision-making it is important that you ensure buy-in from affected individuals because they have the ability to impede progress (Cameron & Lavine, 2006). Especially in complex decisions it is necessary for organizations to seek out active involvement from these parties for the purpose of developing more innovative strategies (Mostashari & Sussman, 2005).

The TDC consultation with the LTA members, regarding their use of LTA technology, is an example of one of the LTA's attempts at outreach. However, there was not an extensive research process or method, which would have shown that the members or other relevant players were supporting the expansion. Building a coalition amongst organization members is an important step in leading change (Kotter, 2007). The Board of the LTA supported expansion, but they began planning before taking into account enough of the opinions of relevant people.

The assessment of membership support and the potential for key stakeholders could have been achieved using additional research methods. Having more data on membership support would help in the decision-making process (Berner, O'Sullivan, & Rassel, 2003). Organizational decisions are an important aspect of public administration because the choices of administrators help shape the organization's identity, while setting the foundation for future growth (Tersine, 1978).

Interconnected with the implementation process is the way in which organizations go about planning (Bardach, 1977). Kotter (2007) notes that it is important to have short-term goals when deciding on a more long-term plan. According to Bolman & Deal (2003) without a plan, an organization is like a ship without a rudder. Plans offer a way to advertise or symbolize the success and/or growth of an organization (Bolman & Deal, 2003). The LTA is working effectively, developing plans like the Information Technology Plan, the "White Papers," the

Business Plan, and the LTA's Strategic Directions. These plans touch on specific programs, services, goals, objectives, and other important details to incrementally make new policy in the organization. The LTA's ability to plan in this way says a lot about the organization and its potential for growth.

Human Resources and Personnel Management

As the President of the LTA you are the central leader of this organization. However, as the LTA has become a more effective land trust organizer through the years, it has been necessary for you to create other leadership positions to help manage it. As of now, the managerial position of Information Services is not filled during a time when membership is growing and you need leadership. It is important to think about how you will bring in new leaders and recruit additional members. In managing the LTA, for the sake of your staff and membership pool, you must focus on recruiting, hiring, and training. These are key human resource issues within public administration.

In the recruiting process, often the highest priority in filling a position is to do it quickly (Gail, 2005); this is due to the high costs associated with turnover (Snell, 2007). However, it is critical to also recruit for a talented worker who fits in with the needs and objectives of the organization (Gail, 2005). In order to do this management must communicate the specific duties the position requires, while explaining the short and long-term goals of the organization (Gail, 2005). To best communicate the job description and specifications to a potential candidate, it is helpful to perform a job analysis (Daley, 2002).

The recruitment process says a lot about the human resources' level of organization and its effectiveness in hiring; it also reflects the nature of the entire organization (Hays & Kearny, 2003). It is difficult to maintain an efficient recruitment process, while also attracting large

numbers of quality job candidates from within or outside the organization (Hays & Kearny, 2003). However, having options in the selection process is a good way to establish a better basis of comparison in seeking out the best candidate (Daley, 2002). Each recruitment opportunity gives you the chance to hire someone who can greatly benefit the organization (Hayes & Kearny, 2003).

From the point of hire, it is essential to continually train staff as the organization evolves (Daley, 2002). With more large and diverse organizations, the training process should incorporate the different types of skills, interests, and backgrounds that the organization embodies (“Learning to Improve...,” 2006). By doing this, members are more likely to work together and learn from each other, creating a more collaborative work environment (“Learning to Improve...,” 2006).

With a diverse environment, this also means that different levels of training must be performed in order to meet a variety of demands and needs. However, the organization must also ensure that the objectives of the organization remain firm and clear (Champathes, 2006). For example, ethical policies of the organization are an important area of training that should be standardized and given considerable attention (Svara, 2007).

On an on-going basis, training should take the form of support and communication (“Learning to Improve...,” 2006). Regular meetings offer ways that managers or leaders can communicate to members, evaluate their performance, and collaborate together as a source of training (“Learning to Improve...,” 2006). As mentioned before, the LTA is doing well in this area, so they should continue utilizing these preexisting meeting tools as they expand in order to train members and staff. However, training will not always be necessary for every personnel issue.

Daley (2002) raises the point that training is often unnecessary because problems with performance are not always solvable using training methods. Such issues, like unshared job expectations or lack of incentives, often create poor performance, which are separate problems (Daley, 2002). Also, it could mean that the organization may have simply chosen the wrong candidate for the job during the hiring phase, stemming possibly from poor recruitment methods (Daley, 2002). This is important to note as you design training procedures for preparing your organization.

Nonprofit Budgeting

In public administration a crucial element of organizational decision-making is the budget (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008). However, the LTA has not shown evidence of a budgetary analysis to help explain what growth and technological development would mean to the organization. Before moving into the implementation process, it would be wise of the LTA to prepare a budgetary analysis in order to help guide their expenditure decisions (Apgar, Brown, & Steinemann, 2005).

An often-used form of analysis for a budget of this size is the cost-benefit analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to help policy or decision-makers think about how to use resources, based on marginal social benefits and costs (Apgar, Brown, & Steinemann, 2005). This is a practical method for justifying large decisions monetarily (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008). Conversely, decisions to determine benefits and costs associated with non-monetary results of a decision or policy would be better served through a cost-effective analysis (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008). However, even with a cost-benefit analysis non-monetary outcomes can be connected to dollars gained or lost (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008).

According to Carlin (2005) organizations often ignore the full costs of their decisions in order to push through desired policies. This is an irresponsible practice because it doesn't accurately show what decisions will entirely mean for the organization, its members, and others that may be affected (Carlin, 2005). In planning a budget it is important to connect the goals of the organization, while also assessing what funding is available (Ewen, Maurer, & Nolen, 1998). The LTA has not done much to link membership and donation support with the future budget.

Recommendations

1. Address Personnel Management Issues

One of the first priorities for the LTA should be to fill the managerial position at Information Services. It is essential to have in place this vital leadership role for the future expansion of the LTA. In recruiting for this position, it would be useful to consider contingency theory in your approach. Based on this theory, it is important to look for specific qualities in a leader that complement the situation of an organization (Northouse, 2004). In your case, you will need a leader who can serve a large number of members and staff, and with the abilities to manage an increasingly complex ICT system.

In seeking out candidates for this position, it is important to be clear about the specific job qualifications. Since this position will be changing with the organization's expansion, you should take the time to assess the position itself (Hayes & Kearny, 2003). To do this it is important to get appropriate feedback from those who understand the needs of this position (Hayes & Kearny, 2003). A meeting with key staff members like Andy Zepp, Phil Jones, and the consultant, John McComb, would be a good way to brainstorm and narrow down the expectations for this position; collaboration is helpful for this type of decision (Cameron & Lavine, 2006).

The recruitment process for this position gives the LTA the opportunity to show potential candidates the standards that the organization represents (Hays & Kearny, 2003). The LTA should take a proactive approach, seeking out the best talent available from sources like school graduate pools, other similar organizations or land trusts, and within the LTA itself (Daley, 2002). At the same time, it would be helpful to utilize the web site and create word of mouth around the organization to find talent (Daley, 2002). The LTA has a large pool of members who could potentially be very valuable as permanent staff.

Another option to consider in the development phase of these changes is to plan steps for recruiting additional members. It is mentioned in the TDC research that the LTA members would possibly be willing to have dues increase in order to give the LTA more resources to provide better services and grow. However, this may be difficult to realize due to the large number of land trust members who are volunteers.

The life bread of this organization is its social capital and its ability to network (King, 2004). If the LTA spends time attracting and nurturing social capital, they can gain more networking capabilities and create more opportunities for donation sources (King, 2004). Membership recruitment can be accomplished simply using the preexisting tools already in place at the LTA (i.e. Exchange magazine, website, email, events, etc.), while instilling a sense of need and urgency (Kotter, 2007).

2. Prepare Organization for Changes and Measure Outcomes

As the LTA expands its regional offices, this will give it the opportunity to tap into new populations. However, in doing so, it will be important for leaders to build coalitions in these geographic areas so that they can establish a strong foundation of support and continue to progress (Kotter, 2007). A couple of ways to popularize what you are doing is through local

government officials and the media (Cameron & Lavine, 2006). Specifically, the LTA could host a series of public meetings, inviting neighbors, media representatives, and other key community members in order to share information on the LTA's activities and establish trust amongst potential stakeholders (Cameron & Lavine, 2006). This could also provide another means for recruiting members.

However, before looking for trust outside of the organization, it is important that it exist within the organization. Using the web site, Exchange magazine, and the email system already in place, the LTA can notify members of the developments in the organization. Also, if there is a small amount of feedback from members, it is crucial that you seek it out. The TDC has performed some interviews, regarding ICT services, but there have been practically no inquiries done in terms of support for organizational growth.

The LTA should send out a survey, using a format similar to what was used by the TDC, asking open-ended questions about organizational growth. This would help the LTA learn about membership concerns and give members a sense of buy-in, which is essential for making organizational decisions (Mostashari & Sussman, 2005). This member feedback will help the LTA generate further ideas on how to adapt (Heifetz, 1994).

According to Kotter (2007), in leading change it is essential to put in place short-term goals for the organization to showcase recognizable improvements. As the LTA changes, it is important to communicate the positive changes resulting from expansion. This can be accomplished by, again, utilizing the Exchange magazine, web site, and the emailing system. However, before communicating this progress, you must determine how to measure it.

A potential framework for linking the planned investment and work with intended results is a logic model (Bonham & Schalock, 2003). This model may help the LTA connect the inputs

for expansion with the intended or foreseen outputs (Bonham & Schalock, 2003). Inputs include the resources of the LTA (i.e. donations, staff time, member participation, etc.), which can help create outputs (i.e. expansion and ICT improvements) for the purpose of short and long-term outcomes (i.e. land trust education and expansion of Land Trust Movement) (“Using Logic...,” 2004). Once you develop the relationship between these factors, you can think about how to examine or measure the outcomes.

In looking at the LTA’s “Strategic Directions,” one goal or intended outcome is to “increase the public’s understanding of land trusts.” This “understanding” can be operationalized, using a questionnaire made up of questions that relate to the concept of “land trust understanding” (Berg, 2007). One way to design this questionnaire is with close-ended questions and a Likert scale to determine different degrees of “understanding.” Using this instrument, you can also perform a longitudinal analysis on membership knowledge of land trusts, measuring before and after LTA’s expansion (Berner, O’Sullivan, & Russell, 2003). Improved scores displayed from this questionnaire will help to determine achieved goals.

3. Assess the Level of Support, Analyze, and Audit the Budget

In developing the budget it is beneficial to link the objectives and goals of the organization to the budget (Ewen, Maurer, & Nolen, 1998). Before financing this venture, it would be beneficial to know how much members would be willing to pay for progressing specific objectives of the LTA. A contingent valuation, which can be attached to the TDC’s “Business Plan,” can help you determine the different levels of support in monetary terms (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008). For instance, you can inquire, specifically to the dollar, how much members would be willing to pay in dues for expansion. Conversely, you can find out the extent to which an increase in dues would deter them from supporting the expansion.

In addition, I recommend adding a cost-benefit analysis to the “Business Plan” in order to measure the outcomes of this organizational growth. By performing such an analysis, the LTA can better rationalize their decision, while also getting the chance to put forth additional thought to potential or foreseeable impacts (Denhardt & Grubbs, 2003). It is understood that there will be an increase in the budget, but the specific budgetary details can allow for a more complete understanding of the inputs and outputs of the LTA (Denhardt & Grubbs, 2003).

Also, this analysis would give you a chance to put a dollar value on land conservation (Schmidtz, 2001). For instance, you would be able to calculate the land value that your sponsored land trusts protect. This kind of information can then be used to assess how much land trusts should pay into the LTA. In general, showcasing these benefits will show potential donors that you are an effective organization worthy of their funds.

Lastly, once you are officially implementing these changes, it will be important for you to ensure that your budget is still reflecting your objectives and priorities. You should consider using either a performance or financial audit in order to account for the changes being made at the LTA. A financial audit will help determine whether your financial statements are in-line with your financial transactions while a performance audit will show if you are achieving the specific objectives in an efficient way (Johnson, Joyce, & Lee, 2008).

Conclusion

The Land Trust Alliance is a thriving organization, and like its environment, it is forced to adapt with the changing elements of life. The core value at the LTA is to help land trusts grow, and this is happening with great success. However, this growth has not taken place in a vacuum; the environment is also changing with technological advancements and new generations of land trust volunteers and workers.

The LTA has decided to expand its operations, but you should keep in mind that with this change there are additional needs to consider. Financially, you must ensure that the budget is set up in a way that reflects the projected costs and benefits from expansion and technological development; it must be analyzed and evaluated on an on-going basis. Also, the organization-its staff, members, and managers-must be in place and prepared to change with it. In administering these changes, it is important to think about some of the concepts and issues that arise in the realm of public administration: organizational change, leadership, budgetary analysis and auditing, ethics, economics, policy analysis, human resource management, hiring, methods of research, training, recruiting, information sharing, collaboration, and trust. Understanding these areas will strengthen your organization and act as a building block for exploring other ideas and methods for adapting.

The LTA is on the right path. It has taken the initiative to hire consultants, develop formal planning procedures, and move towards improving the organization. I hope that the recommendations I have offered you, in terms of preparing the organization, improving its personnel, researching and developing sources of support, and budgeting, will help make the future of the LTA stronger. More importantly, I hope that these recommendations will positively serve the many dedicated people involved in the Land Trust Movement. The fate of open space and nature depend on this worthy cause.

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