



Collaboration 101

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

PREPARED BY PATRICIA EVANS AND BARBARA GRANTHAM

Collaboration 101: An Annotated Bibliography

Prepared by Patricia Evans and Barbara Grantham

Thinking about collaborating with other nonprofit organizations, and want to avoid “reinventing the wheel”? Here’s a selection of resources you may want to consult. They range from anecdotes to formal studies, all published before 2011. Most are from US sources, but the list reflects best efforts to find information from Canada.

What you’ll want to read will depend on the reason for your interest. The bibliography is presented in the following sections:

1. **Top Picks:** A selection of recommended articles that may be particularly useful, including thoughts on who might find each most helpful and why
2. **Overviews and Options:** Introductions to the choices and issues surrounding sharing and collaboration
3. **Back Office Services:** Investment, Information Technology and Gift Processing
4. **Volunteer Management and Human Resources**
5. **Marketing and Communication**

All the citations follow the same format:

- Title of the resource is presented in the form of a hyperlink reference, and clicking on the hyperlink in an electronic copy of the report will open the article in the reader’s Internet browser. Hyperlinks are current as of June 2012.
- Author[s] (and/or organizational/sponsor affiliation if relevant)
- Brief description of subject and relevant content

TOP PICKS

[Administrative Collaborations, Consolidations, and MSOs](#)

Bill Coy and Vance Yoshida, La Piana Associates

Simple yet helpful article outlining key areas for administrative collaboration: finance, human resources, IT, and marketing and communications. Each function is categorized according to degree of integration – collaboration, consolidation, or management service organization. Also includes rubric for assessing costs and benefits. A great resource to help nonprofit leaders start framing their thinking about nonprofits and cooperation. Provides a high level overview of the factors and processes most conducive to successful administrative collaborations and consolidations.

[Community Foundation Strategic Alliances: Partnering for Impact and Sustainability](#)

A Discussion Paper for Community Foundations of Canada

Outlines Canadian collaborations and efforts to support them, including what these alliances are learning about the key elements for successful partnerships. Highlights tools and resources, and refers to examples of agreements, terms of reference, frameworks and other documents that illustrate many of the elements and technical details involved in collaborative work. Lots of practical front line resources and advice.

[The Feasibility and Options for Consolidation of Back Office Operations Project Report](#)

CFLT Idea Lab 2008

A project report on research findings to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Community Foundation Group. Provides a description of collaboration models along with relevant case studies. This group came to the preliminary conclusion that their six community foundations would benefit from having a centralized administrative resource. A terrific example for organizations thinking about the kind of “due diligence” work that may be desirable prior to making a decision about consolidating back office operations.

[Seeking Shared Success: Business model innovation through mergers, affiliations and alliances](#)

Rebecca Graves and Hollie Marston for the Council on Foundations

2011 Report on best practices in the US community foundation field, identifying three main models of consolidation: alliances, in which back-office functions are outsourced; affiliations, in which a host organization provides services to regional affiliates but also maintains local services; and mergers in which two foundations merge together to form a new organization. Includes assessment tool to determine costs and benefits of each structure and key considerations for executives pondering consolidation.

[*Shared Services: A guide to creating collaborative solutions for nonprofits*](#)

The NonProfit Centres Network

Best practices guide for executives planning to engage in shared services. Reviews planning processes and tools for shared service planning, agreement templates and ten case studies of nonprofits in Canada and the US.

OVERVIEWS AND OPTIONS

[*Back-Office Collaboration for Nonprofits: An overview for the Upper Valley*](#)

Andrea Bufka

Describes the cost savings and efficiency associated with coordinating back office work. Includes the description of a 'partnership matrix' and 'strategic restructuring'. Provides examples of various types of collaboration and includes a list of other resources.

[*Better Together: Regional alliances and small community foundation sustainability*](#)

Lucy Bernholz

A research report that uses case studies to describe different methods of regional alliances for small community foundations. Provides information about success factors in building regional alliances.

[*Collaboration in the Third Sector: From co-opetition to impact driven cooperation*](#)

J. Richard Blickstead, Eleanor Lester, and Michael Shapcott, The Wellesley Institute

This report evidence of impact and a framework reflecting research and best practices in collaborations in the third sector, and addresses the myths and realities of effective collaboration. It outlines a model for effective collaboration, and gives a more local perspective on government intentions and societal needs for collaboration in Toronto, the GTA and other communities.

[*Collective Impact*](#)

John Kania and Mark Kramer

This article outlines five types of collaboration, along with five conditions of collective success. Provides an overview of isolated versus collective impact.

[*Community Foundation Strategic Alliances: Partnering for impact and sustainability*](#)

Community Foundations of Canada

Discussion paper reviewing current state of integration of community foundations in Canada with regard to program, administration, and community funds. Includes cases from Canada as well as the US.

[*Cooperating to Survive and Thrive*](#)

Amelia Kohm, Nonprofit World

Review of best practices in the US. Includes 11 cases of different types of shared services, including co-location, back office administration, fundraising services, and marketing.

[*Foundations and Philanthropy at Public Hospitals and Health Systems*](#)

National Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems

Report from 2005 describes 18 foundations interested in a collaborative partnership. Examples of similar institutions looking at shared services.

[*Funder-Initiated Integration Partnership Challenges and Strategies*](#)

Beth Eschenfelder, Nonprofit Management and Leadership

Case study of integration of neighbourhood family centres in Florida. Provides a review of existing literature on alliances and integrations in the US.

[*Human Services Systems Integration: A Conceptual Framework*](#)

Thomas Corbett and Jennifer I. Noyes

US discussion paper that develops a set of organizing principles and constructs for planning a service integration initiative for human services structures. The authors conclude that, although it is not possible to create one all-encompassing definition of "service integration," it is possible to develop an overarching, conceptual framework for understanding and analyzing the essential process involved in such efforts to simplify and transform the service experience of target populations.

[*In Search of Strategic Solutions: A funders briefing on nonprofit strategic restructuring*](#)

David La Piana and Amelia Kohm, Grantmakers for Effective Organizations

Discussion paper outlining key findings from a US national study (2000) examining restructuring in 192 nonprofits. The authors have developed a 'partnership matrix' outlining a continuum of integration that includes administrative consolidation, management service organizations, joint ventures, and mergers.

[*Joining Forces, Fortunes, and Futures: Restructuring and adaptation in nonprofit hospice organizations*](#)

Julie Pietroburgo, Stephen P. Wernet, Nonprofit Management and Leadership

Review of economic and internal political factors facilitating or impeding organizational restructuring in US hospice organizations.

[*Learnings, Case Studies and Guidelines for Establishing Shared and Collaborative Service Delivery in the Non-Government Sector*](#)

Department of Communities, Queensland Government

An overview of shared services and collaboration in non-government organizations (NGOs). Includes case studies, models and examples. Concludes with guidelines and resources for establishing shared services or collaboration between agencies.

[*Managing Shared Services Change: Beyond communication and training*](#)

Accenture

A report describing the development of a change management model for shared services. Recommends that change management techniques are employed from the beginning until after all structures are in place.

[*Merging Wisely*](#)

David La Piana, Stanford Social Innovation Review

A brief article outlining a theoretical framework of different types of collaborations, alliances, and mergers, with concrete cases from the US context.

[*On Becoming Best New Friends: Integrating Front and Back Offices in Community Mental Health and Addictions*](#)

David Reville and Associates/ Ministry of Health, Ontario

Reviews feasibility for consolidation of service delivery and back-office functions among community mental health agencies in Ontario. Provides brief examples of integration in

information technology, information management, financial management, human resources, payroll, insurance, recruitment, audits, bulk purchasing, and marketing.

[Seeking Shared Success: Business model innovation through mergers, affiliations and alliances](#)

Rebecca Graves and Hollie Marston for the Council on Foundations

2011 Report on best practices in the US community foundation field, identifying three main models of consolidation: alliances, in which back-office functions are outsourced; affiliations, in which a host organization provides services to regional affiliates but also maintains local services; and mergers in which two foundations merge together to form a new organization. Includes assessment tool to determine costs and benefits of each structure and key considerations for executives.

[Shared Governance and Shared Leadership: Meeting the challenges of implementation](#)

Linda Scott and Ann-Louise Trust

This article describes the process of developing and implementing a shared governance/ leadership model. Includes examples of human resources shared services and education and research. General article that presents interesting facts and ideas.

[Shared Services – A Brief Review](#)

Federation of Community Social Services of BC

Brief review of best practices in the community social service sector in BC. Highlights key areas of integration: facilities, accounting, group purchasing, communications and marketing, consulting, information technology, human resources, shared programming, labour resources and fundraising. Identifies stakeholder relations and leadership as key factors in successful integration, as well as a long-term revenue stream to support integration. Provides some examples of integration currently underway in BC.

[Shared Services: Issues and options](#)

Suzanne Lawson

A summary of shared services models to improve efficiency. Provides details on the trade-offs for each model.

[*Shared Services: Lessons from the public and private sectors for the nonprofit sector*](#)

Peter Walsh and Cameron Newton

An overview of shared services in the business and nonprofit sectors from Australia. Includes five models for shared services use in the nonprofit sector.

[*A Short Overview of Sharing and Collaboration Across the Nonprofit Sector*](#)

Susan Carter

High-level review of shared services options in the nonprofit sector. Includes some examples of agencies that have implemented shared services strategies.

[*Strategic Alliances in the Voluntary Sector in Canada*](#)

Jane Burke Robertson, The Philanthropist

Review article of integration cases in Canadian nonprofit sector. Identifies key factors impeding integration and types of alliances based on a US model. Clearly outlines legal considerations in the Canadian context, including specific considerations for administrative collaborations.

[*The Feasibility and Options for Consolidation of Back Office Operations Project Report*](#)

CFLT Idea Lab 2008

A project report on research findings to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Community Foundation Group. Provides a description of collaboration models, along with relevant case studies.

BACK OFFICE SERVICES: INVESTMENT, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND GIFT PROCESSING

[*Better Together: Regional alliances and small community foundation sustainability*](#)

Council of Michigan Foundations

Study of five regional alliances of community foundations in the US. Finds that two of the alliances use shared staff to operate the Financial Information Management System, a software product offered by MicroEdge, that provides integrated finance, fundraising, and fund management functions.

[*The Feasibility and Options for Consolidation of Back Office Operations Project Report*](#)

Thomas Southard Hay, Lead Consultant, Council on Foundations

Feasibility study for group of six community foundations in southern Pennsylvania to establish an outsourced back office. Identifies potential vendors to provide services and also outlines generalized template for required back-office accounting, gift processing, and fundraising services.

[*Foundation Source*](#)

US Foundation Management Firm providing back-office and investment support to 1,000 private foundations.

[*Measuring Collaboration: The Benefits and Impacts of Nonprofit Centers*](#)

The Nonprofit Centers Network/Tides

Explores models for a diverse range of shared facilities, known as nonprofit centers. This assessment of organizations sharing facilities in the US and Canada found that organizations in shared spaces experience significant improvements in their overall effectiveness and efficiency, which ultimately yield greater impacts for the communities they serve.

[*New World New Reality – Rethinking Governance 2011*](#)

John S. Griswold

Research paper reviewing current trends in nonprofit investment, including fiscal performance, the traditional role of investment committees, managing complexity in investment portfolios, human resources, and managing risk. Notes that health care institutions are less likely to invest in alternative investment strategies than their educational counterparts. Draws benchmarking data compiled by Commonfund, a US pooled investment institution providing outsourced investment solutions, alternative investment strategies and private capital to 1,500 nonprofits, managing approximately US\$25 billion in assets. Evaluates three modes of outsourcing investment: consultants, outsourced investment office and multi-product firms.

[*npSERV*](#)

NEW

Outsourcing program of NEW, a nonprofit centre in Ann Arbor Michigan providing support services for nonprofits. Provides technical and IT support using Giftworks, a standardized fundraising software program available from Mission Research.

[*Outsourcing Back-Office Services in Small Nonprofits: Pitfalls and Possibilities*](#)

The Management Assistance Group in Partnership with the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation

A study intended to identify innovative approaches to help smaller, community-based social change organizations address their administrative, finance, and other office support needs. Also intended to discover the conditions under which certain approaches work well and identify barriers that prevent organizations from taking advantage of alternative approaches to handling various back-office support functions. Reports both benefits and risks associated with these approaches.

[*Power In Numbers*](#)

MACC CommonWealth

MACC CommonWealth is a shared services venture based in Minneapolis-St. Paul providing back-office support to over twenty nonprofits, specializing in finance and information technology services. Lessons learned include standardizing finance systems, detailed service contracts/agreements, and focus on governance issues.

[*Public Health Foundation Enterprises*](#)

US nonprofit management service organization providing fiscal sponsorship, investment, and administrative services to nonprofits. Includes customer relationship management (CRM) software support and training.

[*Resource-based Approach to IT Shared Services in a Manufacturing Firm*](#)

Mark Goh, Satya Prakash and Roland Yeo

Describes the use of information technology shared services in a multinational firm using a case study. Identifies process and communications as the most important changes when moving to shared services; aligning team members is also imperative. Although written in a business context, raises issues that are also relevant to nonprofits.

[Shared Services in the Nonprofit Sector](#)

Ron Matan

A paper prepared in 2008 by a US accounting professional seeking to advise on the challenges facing nonprofit clients who wish to stretch their resources to cover their operational, financial and managerial needs without diluting their primary commitment to fundraising for their cause. Includes four case studies and concludes that most promise lies in the areas of sharing office facilities, sharing personnel and engaging in group purchasing.

[Supporting the Emergence of a Shared Services Organisation: Managing change in complex health ICT projects](#)

Karen Jean Day

A thesis about hospitals moving to a shared services centre for information and communications technology services. Recommends change management as the imperative factor in a successful move to shared services.

[Tides](#)

US Fiscal Sponsorship organization providing a wide range of investment and management services to nonprofits.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCES

[Best Practices in Volunteer Management: An action planning guide for small and rural nonprofit organizations](#)

Canada Volunteerism Initiative

General resource regarding volunteer management which discusses some opportunities regarding sharing resources with other organizations.

[HR Shared Services Is Hot and Getting Hotter](#)

Jim Scully and Barbara Levin

In this article, the president and founder of Shared Services Institute (SSI), provides insight on the evolution and current state of shared services for HR and describes recent research, based on an online survey conducted by the SSI in February 2010 and sponsored by Enwisen (a consulting firm that helps employers leverage technology to improve their ability to provide efficient and effective HR services.) The article focuses on the technology connection as the framework for creating a shared-services model.

[Shared Services: Beyond finance and into human resources](#)

Peeriosity

Given the success and maturity of the finance-related shared services model, leading companies have moved additional functional area activities into shared services. In the past few years, many organizations are transforming human resources functions and looking at the model used for finance as a roadmap to accomplish their objectives.

[Transforming the Human Resource Function Through Shared Services](#)

Buck Consultants

Assuming that delivery of human resource services is at the core of achieving organizational excellence through human capital, this paper reviews practical and proven approaches to transforming the function to one where HR professionals gain the capacity and competency required to proactively drive strategic business objectives. Though reducing cost is clearly one motivator to transform HR, far more compelling is the interest in generating value for the organization. The demand for HR to create value is also not new; however, few companies have reached their full potential in this regard.

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

[Chattanooga Museums Administrative Consolidation](#)

David La Piana

A case study of administrative consolidation of two US museums. The museums retain individual boards, but share a marketing director, enhancing collaboration in marketing areas, including advertising, media production and joint ticketing, as well undertaking a joint fundraising capital campaign.

[Contracting Out Services Key for Chamber Winds](#)

Sherri Begin, Detroit Business

News article (2007) describing an administration initiative of one arts organization providing management services to four other nonprofits. Since 2004 Detroit Chamber Winds Society (DCWS) has provided administrative leadership to other local arts groups. These organizations have separate missions and governance, but pay fees to DCWS to share office space and administrative services. These relationships have pooled financial resources so that all organizations can afford access to staff with specialized skills in areas such as marketing, development and finance.