Communicating a Shared Vision

Introduction

Dave Dolak (2001) summed up the need for a shared vision in this quote from the assigned reading for this lesson:

The major difference between a company with a vision statement and a company with a clear sense of vision is that a company with a clear sense of vision will have employees who have very strong alignment with the organization's core values. Continuous progress toward the aspirations of the company will be stimulated through a strong sense of vision. That strong sense of vision is achieved through a clearly articulated and communicated vision statement.

Commitment to the vision of the organization is a key quality of leadership. It is necessary for the volunteer administrator to uphold the vision of the organization and work to maintain it as the focus of the volunteer program.

Once you have personally made a commitment to the vision of the organization, you must then communicate that vision to the volunteers, clientele, and the public so clearly that it becomes a shared vision.

Steps to a shared vision

1. Communicate the vision consistently. One suggestion is to create a short phrase that captures the vision that is catchy and can be easily remembered. Two examples from nonprofit organizations are listed below:

   Ronald McDonald House - “The house that love built.”
   Twin City Mission - “Providing a home for the homeless, being a friend to the friendless, and giving hope to the hopeless.”

2. The vision must be modeled through the daily behaviors of the leadership team, especially the Volunteer Administrator. Are resources provided to staff and volunteers to support the vision? Are behaviors of staff and volunteers recognized and rewarded for pursuing the vision? People, both inside and outside of the agency, will notice when behaviors do not match the message.

3. The vision must be shared with others whenever possible. The Volunteer Administrator, as well as other staff and volunteers, should weave the vision into conversations with clientele, civic organizations, potential donors and volunteers, and the media. Repetition brings consistency in your message and greater awareness of
your vision. In addition, Dolak recommends working the vision into as many communication channels as possible, including advertising, marketing campaigns, e-mails, presentations, and other meetings.

Summary
A clearly communicated and shared vision is a powerful motivator for any organization. The Volunteer Administrator plays a crucial role in developing and articulating the vision both internally and externally of the organization.

References