IMPROVING FLAVOR OF SLO: VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT, MOTIVATION, AND GOAL SETTING IN EVENT PLANNING

I chose an event for my senior project because I enjoy coordinating. I inherited this passion from my parents. My mother and father were a perfect duo for events: my dad, a hobby chef and my mother, an interior decorator. I always remember lavish parties at our house but what I remember the most was the planning and preparation that occurred weeks prior. Because of this past, I think planning an event gives me a great sense of accomplishment. The event itself is the climax and seeing everyone enjoy what you have created is the ultimate goal in my eyes. The first event I planned upon moving out of the house was a sit-down Thanksgiving dinner with thirty of my friends. This was not an easy task but worth every moment when I saw all the smiling faces in one place. This experience led me to seek more event planning opportunities at Cal Poly. I signed up for RPTA 420, Event and Festival Management, to learn more about event planning.

In RPTA 420 I met Sarah Hedayati, a fellow communication studies major, who also had an interest in event planning. After attending one of United Way's fundraising events, Flavor of SLO, Sarah learned that the event was a possible senior project. She approached me in RPTA 420 to join the team.

I was interested in this volunteer position because I enjoy project management. The way I organize myself with goals in project-based situations has been very successful. My time management technique is not to solely write down when something is due. I break down the task and assign it to different days leading up to the due date so I am not bombarded by work at the

last moment. In this process I set small goals for myself to ensure a quality end product with time to review the work before it is officially due.

I believe setting goals for volunteers will increase motivation, engagement and ultimately performance. Applying this technique to United Way's Flavor of SLO event will help increase productivity and in turn revenue. The topic I will be presenting is summed up most appropriately as motivating performance through goals with a focus on volunteers. I write this senior project to be used as a tool for Flavor of SLO 2012 hence the title, "Improving Flavor of SLO: Volunteer Engagement, Motivation, and Goal Setting in Event Planning".

In this paper I will begin with an event description, brief history of the event, overall goals, the process of planning, outcomes and my personal experience. Then I will review literature about volunteerism, engagement, motivation and goal setting. Within these sections I will describe how this literature pertains to the Flavor of SLO event and analyze how it is appropriate for implementation. Before concluding I will show a direct link between my work with Flavor of SLO and communication studies principles

DESCRIPTION

United Way is a non-profit organization nationally known for their efforts in giving back to the community. United Way has a three-point goal; to improve education, increase financial stability and advocate healthy lifestyles. Each branch of United Way is responsible for fundraising locally. Flavor of SLO is just one of many fundraisers for United Way of San Luis Obispo. The money is then used for things like campaigns for education, creating affordable housing and public service announcements about active lifestyles for the youth.

Flavor of SLO is a food and wine tasting event that benefits United Way. Attendees pay for a ticket to enter the event and receive limitless food and wine. At the event there are raffle and auction items collected as donations from local businesses and live musical acts. Two coordinators from United Way work with a team of students to guide the process. Team members work independently a majority of the time. Meetings were typically held every other week and once a week as the event approached.

A Cal Poly student for their senior project created Flavor of SLO in 2009. United Way held their third annual Flavor of SLO in 2011, which has always been coordinated by Cal Poly students as their senior projects. In the past there has been a mix of majors: graphic communication, journalism, business, and communication studies.

Goals

The event is increasing profits annually. Flavor of SLO 2010 raised about $3,000 and this year the overall revenue was increased by about $7,000.We did not set a specific monetary goal and were not given one by United Way staff. The ultimate monetary goal was to make more than United Way spent on things like promotional materials, venue, staff and facilities for the event. The event planner and event manager set goals for things like number of attendees, number of vendors, auction items, raffle items and number of volunteers. All goals that were set were attained. Our successful goal setting process influenced me to write my senior project about goal setting and motivation for volunteers.

Process

In describing the process of planning Flavor of SLO I will focus on how communication was initiated and sustained. As described above, Sarah Hedayati and I met in RPTA 420. We then each contacted two other individuals to join us in creating the Flavor of SLO 2011 team. The team consisted of Sarah, Mike Leibovich, Maryn Anderson, Dana Wacks, Kendra Jorde, and myself.

In October, our first meeting consisted of all the team members, excluding the United Way staff. At this meeting we discussed who United Way is, what Flavor of SLO is, what the purpose of the event is and divided the roles established by United Way. The pre-established roles are: event planner, event manager, wine vendor liaison, dining vendor liaison, marketing/graphics design, and website manager. Upon viewing this list and a loose description of responsibilities, we all mentally picked a role for ourselves. Once we started discussing who had experience, coursework, or interest in a certain field we realized that our initial reactions needed to be tweaked. For example, I am an agriculture communication minor and am interested in the viticulture industry. So I was drawn to the wine vendor liaison but once we talked things through we realized another member had more experience with cold calling and I had more experience in event planning due to RPTA 420. This is how I became the event manager. We knew, as we were picking our titles, that we were not stuck to the set of responsibilities. We knew working as a team would require us to ask each other for help in the areas where we were not comfortable. We also knew that if we were really interested in doing a specific task for the experience, we could participate in the activity even if it were not a part of our own official position's duties.

Our next meeting on January 21st was with Rachel Cementina, Program Assistant at United Way, and Charlene Rosales, who is their Chief Operating Officer. This meeting was similar to the one prior. Rachel and Charlene gave us more information on United Way and Flavor of SLO, and we informed them of which roles we had assumed, exchanged contact information, and set a time for future meetings. Our meetings were structured with an agenda created by the event planner; each meeting typically lasted about an hour to an hour and a half. An agenda from one of our meetings is provided in Appendix B as an example. January through March we met once every other week with the exception of spring break. It was not until April that we began meeting once a week. At the end of each meeting we each had at the very least one task to work on until the next meeting. In the time between meetings, communication was established through phone calls, emails and text messages.

Outcomes

The greatest outcome of the event was raising about $10,000. That money will be put back into the community through programs created by United Way. Our team raised about $7,000 more than Flavor of SLO 2010. To us, this meant that we had accomplished something that the years' prior did not. There were many factors, I believe, that contributed to our success. Our ability to set reasonable goals was a large contribution to this success. The fact that we were all communication studies majors also helped us work as a team, we all took classes like Business and Professional Communication, Small Group Communication and Interpersonal Communication. There was not a problem we faced that we did not handle in a timely and appropriate manner. Having such a successful event sets up United Way and Flavor of SLO 2012 for an even better year. People who enjoyed the event will return and will tell their friends and

family about it as well. This is most likely a contributing factor to why our attendance was greater in 2011 than 2010.

Because we were all communication studies majors we did not have a wide variety of coursework background. It would have been helpful to have a business major or graphic communication major. Nevertheless, we managed pretty well without this; though things may have gone smoother with that kind of help and expertise. The driving force for our work seemed to be that our participation would soon be a senior project

Personal Experience

United Way did not provide any incentives. Also, the behavior exhibited by the staff during our meetings pertaining to our work was not motivating, rather frustrating. Whenever I work with a superior I cannot help to think how I would do things differently or similarly. Overall there was a lack of praise and many messages directed to the affect that we were behind schedule though we were not given a clear-cut schedule. These messages were not seen as motivation to work harder, rather the opposite because our work was not being acknowledged properly. After many meetings, as a group or in pairs, team members would get together and talk about how we thought the meeting with United Way went. In many of those post-meetings we complained about how we had not felt appreciated. We had worked hard the week before to ensure our tasks were done for the meeting. We did this on top of doing homework, attending class, working and trying to maintain a social life. We were doing this work for free but we wanted to do it. We were all very proud of the work we had done. To come to a meeting where we are treated like our work was not enough and that we were behind schedule when we really had it under control was very disheartening. It was not until we started seeing direct results, like

ticket sales, that the praise began. This sounds dramatic and I am sure this was not United Way's intention but this is how we *felt*. I think this issue is very important in volunteerism. We all have a common goal to raise money for the community, why not be positive while doing so?

Nonetheless, I did enjoy my time working with United Way. From start to finish I learned a lot about event planning and business communication. At the end of the event I felt so proud of our work and how we contributed as a team. I love to use Flavor of SLO as a part of my portfolio for future employers. Like I described before, I strive for the smile of the happy attendees' faces. At one point it even rained during our event, but no one left! The music kept playing and people danced in the rain. This was such a good feeling, and to share this with my event planning muses, my parents whom attended, made a great day and made every moment of the process worth it.

VOLUNTEERISM

Senior project students coordinate Flavor of SLO and in the non-profit sector they are also considered volunteers. In what follows, I will focus on how volunteering is defined, who is most likely to volunteer, why they may volunteer, and the benefits they receive from doing so. This information will be useful in my later explanation on how to motivate volunteers.

Volunteering can be defined regardless of motive, though motives do come into play in one's choice to volunteer: "Volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause. This definition does not preclude volunteers from benefiting from their work" (Wilson 215). Flavor of SLO volunteers commit to the project knowing that there are expectations about time and energy to be devoted to the project. In the end they will

indeed benefit from their work with skills attained and with senior project material. Wilson explains that volunteering is not defined as a selfless activity because one can, and most likely will, gain something from their experience as a volunteer (215). What one can gain I will explain with the exchange theory below. Other descriptors of volunteerism are that the work calls for a "commitment of time and effort" (216), and that it is formalized and public. Overall, volunteerism is considered a structured process; it is not just simply offering help.

Is volunteering really selfless? The exchange theory states otherwise. When committing to a volunteer role one instinctively will weigh the costs and benefits (Wilson 222). This is one piece of evidence exhibited by the exchange theory that the volunteer may gain from the experience. There must be a benefit that outweighs the cost. Another point of the exchange theory is that "many people volunteer because they anticipate needing help themselves or have already received help and want to give something back" (222). Also, volunteers will take rewards, if they are offered (222). If you are volunteering for an intrinsic reward, to ultimately feel better about yourself, then you are no longer being selfless, but those who have these feelings are more likely to commit to their role as volunteer. "Individuals who think about their contributions to others, feel that they control their contributions to the welfare of others, and feel that they will make important contributions to the welfare of others, are more committed to volunteering than are those who do not share these characteristics" (Matsuba, Hart, & Atkins 901). The exchange theory thus points out that volunteer work may not be selfless, but their commitment to the role is what we are most interested in.

The likelihood of commitment is tied to demographics. A demographic set has been defined pertaining to predictions of who will most likely volunteer. Gender and educational attainment are two of those demographic predictors (Matsuba et al. 890). Multiple studies show

that women are more likely than men to volunteer, but only slightly (Kuntz 26, Matsuba et al. 903; Wilson 227). I found this interesting considering that five out of the six Flavor of SLO 2011 members were female. Education level also seems to be a reliable demographic predictor because "it heightens awareness of problems, increases empathy, and builds self-confidence"; and also, "educated people are also more likely to be asked to volunteer" (Wilson 219). Students are more likely to volunteer if their institution "requires or encourages community service" (229). In my time at Cal Poly I have had many opportunities to volunteer, which I believe made me open to the idea of volunteering and excited for the five months spent working on Flavor of SLO. Wilson also states that those educated will volunteer more and are less likely to quit (230). After my experience with Flavor of SLO I have found myself looking for more volunteer opportunities and am willing to volunteer for United Way in the future.

The predictors of why one volunteers are absent of the volunteer's motives. The motives of volunteers are greatly debated. Kuntz describes values, religious obligations and morals as motivations to volunteer (26). But, as Wilson states, "the relation between values and volunteering is weak and inconsistent [religious and civic values do little to encourage volunteering]" (219). Kuntz does point out other motives besides values and religion, however: for example, volunteering as a way to meet new people, identify with the community or confronting a fear (26). In all, whatever the motive may be it cannot be completely selfless or selfish "because some specific motives combine other-interest and self-interested considerations and because many people indicate that they have both kinds of reasons for volunteering" (Clary & Snyder 157). As Flavor of SLO volunteers, we do gain a lot of information that is applicable to our senior projects, but we were also interested in helping the community and in gaining experience with a non-profit company. While considering the volunteer position, I thus saw that

the benefits of the role were of greater worth than the time and energy needed. My motives, then, were mixed, and not fully altruistic or egoistic.

While weighing the costs and benefits, a prospective volunteer may or may not know all the benefits of volunteering. Being an active participant in the community can help support one's mental health, "It can also convince people they can make a difference in the world, and this feeling is known to buffer people from depression. The data confirm that volunteering boosts self-esteem and self-confidence and increases overall life satisfaction" (Wilson 232). The nature of volunteering often requires face to face interaction and a duty that later brings a sense of accomplishment, which in turn seems to increase one's mood and outlook on life. Volunteering college students, like the Flavor of SLO team, are more likely to pursue an advanced degree than their non-volunteering colleagues and "are more likely to see an improvement in their grade point average" (233). These are not motives of volunteering but it is an underlying factor that affects the experience of the volunteer.

ENGAGEMENT

At this point, I will discuss employee engagement before moving on to motivation. Engagement is important in volunteerism and for non-profits. A volunteer's commitment to the role with time and energy greatly affects the workforce of non-profits, like United Way, who depend on volunteers. For our purposes, the word 'employee' can be interchanged with 'volunteer' in the context related to Flavor of SLO. Engagement is defined as "the employee's sense of purpose and focused energy that is evident to others through the display of personal initiative, adaptability, effort, and persistence directed toward the organization's goals" (Mone et

al. 206). And also that engagement is "having a deep and broad connection with the company that results in the willingness to go above and beyond what is expected to help the company succeed" (206). These things are hard to informally measure, but behaviors such as involvement, commitment, passion, and empowerment are also present in engaged employees (206).

One way of affecting an employee's engagement is through performance management. Performance management activities include: "setting performance goals, providing ongoing feedback and recognition, managing employee development, conducting mid-year and year-end appraisals, and building a climate of trust and empowerment" (Mone et al. 205). I will expand on the performance management idea of goal setting in the dedicated section below. Providing feedback is also a very important aspect of performance management. Clampitt states "60% of employees are dissatisfied with the performance feedback system" (156). I agree with that sixty percent because I felt Flavor of SLO lacked adequate feedback. As mentioned earlier, the feedback we were receiving created stress because we felt we had gone beyond the worked that was asked of us but were not receiving the necessary praise.

A possible consideration for Flavor of SLO 2012 should be workdays at the United Way office once a month for at least two hours. This could include the bi-weekly meeting. This way the overseers can watch and see productivity of the team members, and members could work together on a project and can ask questions as they arise. I believe with this addition the feedback given to team members from United Way staff will be more accurate. Another addition should be to the event planner's position; they should be responsible for providing mandatory weekly feedback. This should include positive recognition and room for improvement. This will also help the event manager and event planner stay up-to-date and informed of each member's weekly tasks. This will require constant communication "Constant communication can also boost

staff morale" (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence 32). This will increase overall communication between meetings, which can increase volunteer enthusiasm toward their work. I stress the need for feedback, especially positive recognition because "recognition and reward are critical to employee engagement and they enhance satisfaction, motivation, and morale" (Mone et al. 208). I believe more recognition would have led to a more satisfied volunteer base and decreased the number of post meetings informally held as a team.

Flavor of SLO is a volunteer based group, but the group dynamic needs to be structured like that of any other successful company: "They must focus on innovation, productivity, communication, and development if they are to succeed. And they'll need volunteers and board members who are adept in facilitating those strategies" (Mackin 12). With a more communicative structure the Flavor of SLO team can become more effective. My suggestions will be added in Appendix A for the event planner to schedule in the group calendar and facilitate.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is a tricky thing to pinpoint. According to Skemp-Arlt and Toupence motivation is defined as "The complex forces, needs, drives, tension states, or other mechanisms within us that will create and maintain voluntary activity directed toward the achievement of personal goals" (28). Motivation bridges the gap between where one is and where one wants to be (28). These definitions are goal centered but we cannot ignore need-centered definitions like this one, "Motivation is defined as the process that determines how energy is used to satisfy needs. Motivation is a resource-allocation process where time and energy are allocated to an

array of tasks. Motivation includes the direction, intensity, and persistence of this allocation process" (Latham & Pinder 502). It is important to understand that there is a need to factor in motivation because from here we can begin to understand why people act a certain way. But, the downfall is we do not know why people choose specific behaviors for differing situations to reach a certain outcome (488). Predicting behavior from motivation would be a waste of time for managers, focusing on understanding what motivates employees and how they can create an environment that is conducive to productive work is more efficient.

Herzberg's motivatior-hygiene theory can help explain how to create this productive work environment. As I learned in Organizational Communication, Herzberg theory is split into hygiene factors and motivation factors. Hygiene factors "include company policy and administration; supervision; salary; interpersonal relations with superiors, subordinates, and peers; and working conditions" (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence 30). Fostering hygiene needs can prevent dissatisfaction but do work as motivators (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence 30). Though hygiene factors do not create motivation they should still be a concern to the manager so that employees themselves can focus on reaching a level of motivation.

The manager's role is not necessarily to motivate but to "refrain from diminishing employee motivation and to provide the means by which employees can become self-motivating" (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence 32). For Flavor of SLO the goals should be set as described below but that alone is the most direct link the manager will ever have with their employee's motivation. Otherwise it can become a guessing game, "Each employee will respond to a different mix of internal and external stimuli" (30). Motivational strategies like personal regard, communication, participation, and recognition, are really hygiene factors not motivators (30). The suggestions above regarding feedback and performance management for Flavor of

SLO 2012 align with Herzberg's motivation theory. The Flavor of SLO volunteers will perform self-motivated, productive work if the overseers can provide the right environment.

GOAL SETTING

As described above, employee engagement is a key to success in any company. Performance management is not the only thing that increases engagement. Goal setting is also a positive indicator of employee engagement (Medlin 54, Mone et al. 206). A goal is "a level of performance proficiency that we wish to attain, usually within a specified time period" and it "provides people with a sense of purpose" (Latham & Locke 332). Why should we set goals? Skemp-Arlt and Toupence put it best, "One of the first steps in communication involves the development and publication of clearly stated goals. This will eliminate any uncertainty the staff may have of the administrator's expectations. The goals should be set high, but remain attainable by both employee and administrator" (32). Another reason to set goals is so that employees can see the connection of their work and the final outcome (Mone et al. 207). By setting a standard and expectations with goals it "increases our effort, prolongs persistence, and cues us to search for appropriate strategies to attain it" (Latham & Locke 334). The goal is meant to challenge the employee or volunteer. The end point is set but it is the volunteer's responsibility to pursue a means of accomplishing it.

There are discrepancies in goal setting research on how exactly a goal should be set. Overall, it seems that goals are just as effective in increasing performance regardless of who sets them, as long as a rationale is provided (Latham & Locke 332). But it is also said that "Employees who perceive themselves as decision-makers tend to have a higher level of job

satisfaction and professional growth" (Skemp-Arlt & Toupence 32). To create a happy medium, the event manager and each team member should come up with specific goals together. The pre-established goals I created in Appendix A are loose and meant as a template. As they see fit they can make more challenging goals or simplify them. The team members should take Locke's Goal Theory into account which states that specific goals should be made, the bigger the challenge the harder one will work and setting goals together will lead to greater acceptance and satisfaction (30). "High goals lead to greater effort" and those "that are specific and difficult lead to a higher level of performance…"(Latham & Locke 332). As long as goals are realistic yet challenging members will strive to attain them and will receive a great sense of achievement from them (338).

Along with the tailored goal setting, I think it would be beneficial for Flavor of SLO members to write what skills they hope to gain in their position while working toward the event. This is setting a different kind of goal, a learning goal. Such goals help direct cognition in one's progression toward a concrete goal and bring pleasure simultaneously, knowing one's abstract goal, learning goal, is also being met (Latham & Locke 334, Freitas & Higgins 5).

Failing to attain a goal should not be seen as a lesson lost. We can learn from our mistakes because "Failure and false starts are usually precursors to success" (Latham & Locke 335). Team members that do not meet a goal should not be punished, they should only be asked to reflect on what they would have done differently were they to do it again from the beginning, and on how they will plan to ensure attainment of the next goal. Maybe the failing of a goal will help find room for improvement in the pre-established goals or the goals they set personally. This information should be passed along to the following years Flavor of SLO group. In all, setting goals eliminates uncertainty of expectations, helps employees see their work as

productive towards the company's goals, creates a challenge, becomes a learning process, increases performance, and creates a sense of achievement. This in turn can drive volunteers to be engaged and motivated about their work.

PRE-ESTABLISHED GOALS

In Appendix A I have included a breakdown of tasks that need to be completed by each role, organized by month. I created this based on the Flavor of SLO 2011 timeline, but have made a few adjustments. For example, we should have found volunteers sooner than we had anticipated, so I suggest in the pre-established goals that they begin looking for volunteers as soon as possible. Also, Flavor of SLO 2012 will be on May 6th rather than May 15th so adjustments were made accordingly. At first I was going to break down the goals by week but I thought it was very important for the team members to prioritize the tasks themselves. The event planner should distribute the pre-established goals and ask the team members to set deadlines and goals for themselves for each week of the month. There should be a meeting revolving around the team members sharing with the rest of the group the goals they have set for themselves. Here, the event planner can question the goals set by individuals and they can make a compromise if the goal is not appropriate or the team member can provide a rationale for choosing such goal. In this process the team members will feel as if they are making their own goals and, as discussed above, will be more likely to strive and attain those goals.

If Flavor of SLO 2012 starts in the fourth week of January like we did they will have about fourteen weeks for the event, compared to our fifteen weeks. The 2012 group should thus consider starting in the third week of January to have enough time due to the event date change.

The tasks are a little lighter in March due to Cal Poly's spring break from March 16th-26th. Team members can still do work during this time but it seemed to be slower in productivity in our group. This was not a problem as long as team members get work done the week prior as well as after spring break.

The event manager and event planner should facilitate the group tasks that are listed in Appendix A, done by all members of the group collectively. The ultimate decisions and responsibilities of the group tasks are duties of the event manager and event planner. The group tasks are predominately in the beginning and end of the event planning process because during the middle months team members are mostly working individually. Members will still be working together but there will be fewer tasks that can be performed collectively. The responsibility of finding and booking musical acts is under the website manager's role because our website manager had a large role in the process and had fewer tasks overall compared to other roles. It is up to the group who manages the task of seeking and booking musical acts. It may seem that some months some roles have fewer tasks than others but this is because each task requires varying amounts of energy. For example, follow-ups and seeking donations are tasks that require a lot of energy and sometimes are unfruitful, requiring more effort later. Tasks like updating the Facebook status or blogging can take a predicted amount of time. When team members have fewer tasks they should offer their help elsewhere. By setting weekly goals the manager will know what specific task a group member is working on each week. When one team member is in need of help the event manager can delegate another team member that might not have as much work that week to help out.

The blog is a new task that was not present last year. Because the blog is a new addition, all benefits of the blog are only speculation. Frequent Facebook updates and blogs done by the

website manager will create more Flavor of SLO online content. The blogs can vary in topic as long as it relates to Flavor of SLO and should be done bi-weekly, most likely after meetings. This will ensure the website manager will be up to date with all the team members' tasks and matters the public would be interested in. Facebook and blog content can help create hype for the event and a larger Internet presence. The following year could also use this blog as a timeline reference or a reference for the details of the process. Considering how successful Flavor of SLO 2011 was, Flavor of SLO 2012's team can benefit from our timeline and tasks with the necessary adjustments.

APPLICATION OF THE FLAVOR OF SLO EXPERIENCE TO COMMUNCATION STUDIES

Here I will connect my work with Flavor of SLO to skills and principles I learned in communication studies courses. Our daily work consisted of all basic communication principles, but what I found most appealing was experiencing situations we had described in Organizational Communication and Small Group Communication. These situations went from hypothetical to reality. In this process it strengthened my knowledge surrounding these subjects. In this section I will describe situations in which I gained a greater understanding of the communication principles I learned from my classes at Cal Poly.

In Organizational Communication I learned about different types of conflict. The provided feedback for Flavor of SLO 2011 created perceived conflict. Perceived conflict is the recognition that frustrating differences are present in the group but are not expressed. Perceived conflict best describes the climate between Flavor of SLO volunteers and United Way staff. The team knew what work had been done and naturally formulated an idea of how we should be

treated for that work. United Way staff had a deadline that they did not feel we were meeting. As a team we expressed this conflict together but never presented it to our superiors. I think the difference of our attitudes was due to low levels of goal clarity "lower levels of goal clarity and goal difficulty may increase inter- as well as intradepartmental conflict...the resulting levels of higher perceived conflict result in lower levels of internal work motivation and intrinsic job satisfaction" (Schnake & Cochran 178). Perceived conflict can occur for various reasons, but Schnake and Cochran explain that goal clarity and difficulty can cause perceived conflict. This is why I suggest a clear goal setting process; it will reduce the perceived conflict and create a better working environment.

One of my suggestions is that during the goal setting process the individual team members should take the Pre-Established Goals By Role and Monthly Timeline provided in Appendix A and create more specific deadlines. After doing this, a meeting will be held to discuss the goals. When discussing whether the specific goals and deadlines are appropriate, realistic conflict can occur. Realistic conflict, according to Harris, is where we disagree on the means to attaining the goal but we agree to the goal itself (399). This type of conflict is effective and acceptable. But, this is not the kind of conflict we had as a group. What best describes our situation is nonrealistic conflict, where there is a disagreement over the goals. Goals were not clearly stated in the beginning of the Flavor of SLO 2011 planning process, so we created our own and they did not coincide with the United Way staff's goals. This could also be considered pseudo or procedural conflict because we did not receive adequate information regarding goals, causing difficulties.

In Small Group Communication, a class both Sarah and I took prior to Flavor of SLO, we learned that a democratic style of leadership is most effective because it is balanced and fair. A democratic leader does not assume full responsibility for all decisions. With this style of

leadership a leader will not work solely for self-interest but will take followers into account in decision-making (Van Eeden 255). Sarah and I were the event planner and event manager; we both chose a democratic, or transformational style, of leadership which proved to be very effective. As leaders, Sarah and I often asked one another and our team members for input before making final decisions. This had a positive effect on our team morale, no one felt as if they were not consulted for important decisions that would ultimately affect the whole team. In Appendix C I provided an example of my democratic leadership style. In the example we are emailing one another regarding a final decision on our t-shirt logo and suggesting places we could purchase the t-shirts. As can be seen I reiterate the design we agreed on but at the end of the email I request team members to share their thoughts. I encourage the team to share their input on the final decision because I chose a democratic style of leadership that takes all members' ideas into account.

In the process of Flavor of SLO we had many opportunities to showcase our public speaking skills. United Way felt it would be best if the students advertised the event. United Way signed the team up for the Chamber of Commerce breakfast where we had about five minutes to describe Flavor of SLO to the other guests and encourage them to participate as vendors, attendees or donors. Appendix D is the script for our speech. We also gave informal speeches to our classes to encourage fellow students to attend.

The Small Group Communication, Organizational Communication and Speech Communication skills and principles presented here are just a few of many that could be applied to the event. The principles I have discussed are the most important and relevant concepts related to this event.

CONCLUSION

The suggestions I have made for Flavor of SLO 2012 are somewhat simple. However, I am confident that they will improve motivation, productivity and volunteer engagement. All of these factors will help United Way's fundraisers, particularly Flavor of SLO, become more successful and the increased proceeds will benefit the community. These suggestions will help volunteers be enthusiastic and productive in their roles. This is important because "Volunteers are becoming more selective about their involvement. They question the impact and results of what they do, and they need clear and credible information from the nonprofits where they volunteer" (Mackin 11). Volunteers want to see that their work is directly benefiting the community, providing a goal setting structure will ensure this and increase volunteer involvement.

Addressing goals in the initial Flavor of SLO meeting will set expectations and prepare volunteers for the work ahead. With goals set and aside, managers can focus on creating a comfortable and supporting environment so the team members can motivate themselves to attain their goals. By setting goals as a group we were very successful and we saw how our goals directly affected the outcome. For example, we set a goal of twenty vendors and two hundred attendees and we exceeded both goals. We had so many vendors that the layout of the event was constantly changing to ensure that all the vendors would fit in the space provided. To us, seeing a packed venue with guests and vendors was a visual representation of the attainment of our goal. The sense of achievement from this event created such an intrinsic reward I have continued to set goals for myself in this fashion relating to other aspects of my academic and professional life. Bringing six very different individuals together to create an event that went without a hitch is

something I am very proud of. I strongly believe if we had not set our goals we would not have the sort of motivation we exhibited. Flavor of SLO 2012 will no doubt be a successful event if they use Flavor of SLO 2011 as a building block for their planning process. The five months spent on planning Flavor of SLO 2011 was an incredible learning experience and worth every moment. With the pre-established goals divided by roles, as seen in Appendix A, I want to create a communication framework that United Way can continue to use even after Flavor of SLO 2012. I hope that the Flavor of SLO 2012 volunteers continue to build off of my senior project to help the event progress annually.

Works Cited

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APPENDIX A
Pre-Established Goals By Role and Monthly Timeline

Event Manager

January

Plan and facilitate in office workdays

Create/ update donation forms
Combine group members schedule into one document, distribute to the group
Request individuals to create specific goals based on this timeline

February

Plan and facilitate in office workdays
Seek donations
Hire security guards
Plan floral/décor
Continue to research volunteer options

March

Plan and facilitate in office workdays
Seek donations
Find volunteers
Set plan for 'day of' specific instructions for security guards

April

Plan and facilitate in office workdays
Discuss equipment needs with bands
Distribute flyers/ put up posters on campus
Rough booth layout
Find volunteers
Appoint volunteer manager for day of and create for them a schedule/ timeline
Map event booth, entertainments, front door, auction /raffle

May

Plan and facilitate in office workday
Create volunteer thank you
Make 'day of' list of supplies needed & start collecting/ purchasing with event planner

Event Planner

January

Meeting agendas
Set goals for attendance, bands, vendors, auction/ raffle items, number of volunteers, ticket release/ cut off with event manager
Weekly feedback
Request a list from team members of the skills they wish to attain

February

- Meeting agendas
- Seek donations
- Set deadlines for attendance, bands, vendors, auction/ raffle items, number of volunteers, ticket release/ cut off with event manager
- Find wine glass sponsor/ order
- Weekly feedback

March

- Meeting agendas
- Seek donation
- Research Permits
- Instruct teammates to make in class announcements after spring break
- Weekly feedback

April

- Meeting agendas
- Rough draft 'day of game plan'
- Seek donations
- Check event permits
- Weekly feedback

May

- Meeting agendas
- Solidify 'day of' timeline and game plan
- Plan workday the day before the event
- Create/laminate signs for event
- Weekly feedback

Dining Vendor liaison & Wine Vendor liaison

January

- Update vendor packets- logo, dates, times and location

February

- Print/distribute vendor packets
- Create strategic vendor distribution list (sets of about 30 companies at a time)

March

Follow up with vendor packets

(Follow up includes calling, emailing, showing up in person to get a commitment and also all necessary paperwork- typically takes multiple points of contact)

Send out second set of packets

Distribute promotional materials to participating and local businesses

April

Follow up with vendor packets

Send out last blast for vendor packets

Check permits of all vendors

Distribute promotional materials to participating businesses

May

Email vendors with details of arrival and set up

Ensure vendors have all necessary equipment

Marketing/Graphic Design

January

Update promotional materials

Find sponsorship/ look for deals on printing

Find logo design

February

Find t-shirt printer/sponsors

Create media packet for radio stations
Research and implement marketing outlets

March

Distribute t-shirts
Create list of strategic events for group to attend to pass out promotional materials
Contact community calendars to get event posted

April

Prepare a video/ update 2011 video for chamber breakfast and post online
Find strategic marketing opportunities related to bike month (May)
Distribute promotional materials to local businesses to advertise the event

May

Email blast to potential attendees

Website Manager

January

Create Bios of teammates
Blog (about initial ideas and excitement)

February

Update website
Research musical acts

Blog

March

Friend potential incoming vendors on Facebook
Create bi-weekly status updates about the event on Facebook
Contact/book musical acts
Blog

April

Pictures of teammates in t-shirts on Facebook/ website and on teammates' personal Facebook
Update website/Facebook with incoming vendors
Blog

May

Final update on Facebook, website, and blog

Group Tasks

January

Brainstorm Ticket prices
Develop questions for site visit
Discuss points to be made in media releases: event calendars, Facebook, website, speeches, bike friendly events
Research musical acts
Create volunteer database- sororities, clubs, friends and community

April

Attend board meeting/ chamber meeting
Class announcements
Sell tickets in person one month prior to the event
Attend strategic events to pass out flyers

May

Attend strategic events to pass out flyers
Class announcements
Preparation day before event

APPENDIX B
Sample Meeting Agenda

3rd Annual Flavor of SLO
Sunday May 15, 2011
Jack House and Gardens

Team Meeting

March 4, 2011

I. **Logistics:**
   a. **Entertainment**
      i. **Rich Ferguson – Magician**
      ii. **Take it SLO: a capella – Maryn**
      iii. **Chase McBride – Maryn**
      iv. **History of Painters – Rachel**
      v. **The JD project – Sarah**
   b. **T – shirts**
      i. **Kendall's brother**
   c. **Silent auction**

II. **Vendor update:**
   a. **Current Vendors**

Autry Cellars	**Petra Mediterranean Pizza & Grill**
Central Coast Brew	**Popolo**
Kelsey See Canyon Vineyards	**Shalimar**
Norman Vineyards	**SLO Brew**
Opolo Vineyards	**Splash Café**

III. **Website/Marketing update:**
   a. **Facebook page**
      i. **Like/post confirmed vendors and silent auction donors**
   b. **Community Board information**
   c. **Class announcements**

APPENDIX C
Democratic Leadership Example

From: Kendall Young
To: Sarah Hedayati, Maryn Anderson, Mike Leibovich, Dana Wacks and Kendra Jorde.

Hi everyone,

I just got off the phone with my brother and he said our ideas for the t-shirt were doable.

To confirm we wanted: an outline of the logo shape unfilled. Inside the outline will be just "Flavor of SLO" in the same text but without the shadow.
For the back- the circle with silhouettes of the wine, fork, and bottle. This will be a large white circle on the center back of the shirts with the glass, fork, and bottle colored by the shirt color. We will have FlavorofSLO.com on the back bottom of the shirt more towards the hem line.

If this is ok with everyone our next step is to get the shirts. We need to measure the size of the front and back so Mauria can make a template that is appropriate in size. This means finding shirts in town we can get our hands on. We only have till Wednesday, I'll keep my eye out.

Mike- We agreed with you in sticking with red, but we wanted to see the logo in different shades of red. The t-shirts will hopefully be red with all the logo and text in white.

Dana said Old Navy doesn't have any red shirts but they have a lot of charcoal. Forever 21 is also out of the question.

Everyone let me know your thoughts on this please!

Thanks,
Kendall

From: Sarah Hedayati
To: Kendall Young

Hi Kendall,

I think you have the design for the shirts down pat. In regards to the actual shirts, I've tried looking online at both target and old navy and neither have a red shirt. I'm going to keep looking and let you know if I find something. I wish we could find a basic red shirt, but I'm not sure where to find them. Sometimes craft stores like Michael's or Beverly's has plain shirts but I'm not sure if they have red. Anyways, I'll keep looking and let you know if I find something.

From: Dana Wacks
To: Kendall Young

Hey Kendall,

For the circle on the back, will we use cream instead of white if it is available?

If we go with charcoal, red or deep red would look good. Meanwhile, I'll also keep looking for red tees!

Thanks,
Dana

From: Mike Leibovich
To: Kendall Young

Maybe the GAP sells red t-shirts. I sent Mauria an email asking for different shades of red, I'll get back to you when she gets back to me. Also, Not exactly sure what you're taking about with the logo modification for t-shirt Kendall --- maybe we can talk on the phone and clear it up

cheers,

Mike

APPENDIX D
Chamber of Commerce Speech Script

Dana: Good Morning San Luis Obispo! We are a Cal Poly Senior Project Team and we are here to tell you about Flavor of SLO.

I am _____
I am _____
I am _____ (this section can go to the right starting with Dana, circle around)

I am _____
I am _____
And I am _____

Kendall: Flavor of SLO is a local tasting event this May 15th showcasing the flavors of San Luis Obispo. 100% of the proceeds benefit United Way of San Luis Obispo County, an amazing nonprofit we are sure you already know a lot about!

Maryn: Now, we could tell you about the amazing local live music, the fabulous entertainment, and the wonderful raffle items we've been collecting for months. We could talk about each succulent morsel from the restaurants, the smooth wines, and the refreshing beers… But really, let's face it. You are the entrepreneurs of San Luis Obispo. You speak numbers, and want facts without all the fluff. So here they are:

Mike: Buying a ticket and attending Flavor of SLO, a LOCAL event held at The Jack House and Gardens on Marsh Street saves you over 200 miles round-trip and that is just for the wineries. Flavor of SLO only costs $35.00 for presale tickets, which is less than the money you would spend on gas alone. So don't waste your money and time; enjoy the best the area has to offer right here in San Luis.

Sarah: Buying a ticket for Flavor of SLO guarantees you a wonderful afternoon minutes from your house, and most importantly all the money we raise goes to United Way of SLO County, a nonprofit which has been giving back to this community for over 50 years. Doing good never tasted so delicious!
For information on the event, as well as tickets, visit flavorofslo.com. Check back in online for the latest news.

Kendra: We hope to be seeing all of you there, BUT one of you has actually won two free tickets already! If you wouldn't mind looking at your postcards… can the person that has the colorful United Way logo on the bottom left please stand up?

Congratulations, we have a winner! Come see us after to get your tickets.

Dana: Thank you!