



## The Legacy Group Event Summary

The Vesper Service Network brought together 6 Vesper Advisors and 23 faith-based organizations for a networking event on April 10, hosted by The Legacy Group and sponsored by an anonymous donor. The event gave ministry leaders an opportunity to network with their colleagues and exchange ideas on management, marketing and research, resource development, technology, and volunteer management. Each Vesper Advisor, a business person with experience in one of these areas, hosted small group discussions and lent their expertise to the conversations. Every participant had the opportunity to talk with at least three Advisors about the topics that interested them most.

The following are highlights of what we heard and learned at the event:

### *Communicating With Supporters*

- Tell your story based on “who” you serve, rather than what your organization does. Determine who your constituents are, then use their stories to describe what you do.
- Get your organization's message out by having everyone – from the receptionist to the CEO – tell the same two simple stories that best embody your organization's values and culture.
- Keep donors connected and let them know how they helped their community by sending regular emails listing all of the organization's accomplishments. Consider having board members send those emails out too, so that they can also be involved.
- An online blog written by staff or board members can spread the word in an informal way, and let friends of the organization know what it is up to. It's also a nice way to allow constituents to communicate and interact with the organization.

### *Managing Board and Volunteers*

- Sometimes it might be necessary to retire a board member who is on a different page than the organization. Retiring, instead of asking for a resignation, is a good way to honor his or her service while creating opportunities for new leadership for the organization.

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- Have clearly defined processes in place so everyone knows what needs to be done, and make sure every process can be used consistently by every individual within the organization.
- Create a volunteer process checklist covering duties to be performed, the time commitment needed, any cost that might be involved, and anything else that might be needed to make it easier to communicate expectations and make sure misunderstandings don't happen.

### *Using Technology*

- Don't overlook some of the new technology tools just because there are some questionable websites and ads online. Despite a few "bad apples," using the Internet can be very effective in spreading the word and benefiting your community. A web site is a good start. Once this is in place, explore other options for telling your story, like blogs and social network sites, like the Vesper Service Network's online community.

We also learned three common things that all organizations seem to struggle with:

- Consistency is essential. And consistency is easiest when there are processes clearly defined for everyone to follow.
- Everyone needs to keep in mind the ultimate goal of any organization – to transform lives – and tell the stories of how your organization is transforming lives for your constituents.
- One of the biggest challenges is learning to think from someone else's perspective. What need in the lives of constituents is your organization filling?

Finally, we discussed what ministry leaders like themselves want. The following is what we heard:

- They welcomed the chance to connect with each other and with knowledgeable resources, like the Vesper Advisors, and would like more opportunities to do so.
- They would like to have a more clear and effective process to engage help - from supporters, donors, constituents, or volunteers.
- They want more and continued connections to resources, like Vesper Advisors, who can help them with all areas of the organization.
- They want to have a crisp, clear message about their organization and how it differs from others; they want help telling their story.