

## ☀ Spring 2005 Newsletter from Joan Roberts Consulting ☀

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### 1-Public Workshop:

For the first time in two years, I am delivering a public workshop on building successful alliances, coalitions and partnerships. Ryerson's Oakham House is still under construction as their new student centre, so I am having this one at the Metro Central YMCA. Seating is limited so register early!

### **Build Successful Alliances, Coalitions and Partnerships!**

**April 12, 2005**  
**9:00 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.**  
**Cost: \$200\***  
**Metro-Central YMCA**  
**20 Grosvenor St**  
**Toronto, Ontario**

***For more information:***  
**Tel: 416-523-0390**  
**[www.joanroberts.com](http://www.joanroberts.com)**  
**[acpworkshop@sympatico.ca](mailto:acpworkshop@sympatico.ca)**

*\*includes lunch and a copy of my book Alliances, Coalitions and Partnerships, Building Collaborative Organizations*

To download the workshop brochure or register by credit card go to  
<http://www.joanroberts.com/workshop-2005.htm>

### 2-Coaching Teleclass:

For those of you who have already taken my introductory workshop, teleclass or read my book, I am hosting a coaching teleclass. I would like for this to be regular monthly event,

providing a time and space for those folks who convene, co-ordinate or participate in alliances coalitions and partnerships and would like support with day to day challenges.

The class is designed for participants to bring an issue from their group and have others including myself, share ideas and strategies to move the process forward. Depending on the issue/s presented, post class handouts will be customized to the issues raised in the session.

Possible topics:

- Commitment
- Common ground
- Conflict
- Cross boundary collaboration
- Decision-making
- Evaluation
- Governance
- Leadership
- Knowledge management
- Organization culture
- Political dynamics
- Trust
- Work co-ordination

Date: April 1, 2005

Time: 12:00 noon eastern time

Cost: \$29.00

To register go to <http://www.joanroberts.com/teleclas.htm>

### **3-What is a vision and why is it important!**

By Joan Roberts

A vision is a picture of the organization's desired future and what we ultimately hope to accomplish as a result of our efforts? The action of creating a vision forces us to take a stand for a preferred future.

The vision is also our way of discovering that serving the trans-organizational system (TS)\* also serves our organization's self-interest. We give leadership when we create a vision that positions our TS and member organizations in relation to the target group or end client and our own colleagues. Our vision channels our deepest values and becomes a

word picture of we want our values to be lived out in our alliance. coalition or partnership.

Not just any vision will do. Because we choose to pursue our vision in the uncharted territory between government and sole organizations, it needs to be both strategic and lofty. The strategic element of a vision involves staying focused on our end target group or service users to express in the vision how we will achieve the mission of the TS. This helps connect each goal and objective with something important, namely the success of the vision.

Our vision is very different from our goals and objectives. Goals and objectives are basically a prediction of what is to come. A vision is the preferred future, a desirable state and an ideal state.

A vision consists of three characteristics: 1) an organization's fundamental reason for existence beyond just making money or providing more service 2) its timeless unchanging core values, and 3) a "big picture" aspiration for its own future. The vision of a TS defines who and what the TS is about, why it exists, and where it is going in the grand scheme of things.

#### **Qualities of an Effective Vision:**

- 1) Gives direction and purpose
- 2) Inspires and motivates people
- 3) Creates guiding principles and sets standards
- 4) Simple and concise
- 5) Aligns the values of member organizations
- 6) Reflects the strengths of the organization

#### **Thoughts on creating the vision:**

- Forget about being number one
- Don't get practical
- Begin with your end users or target group
- You can't treat your clients any better than you treat each other
- If your vision statement sounds like motherhood and apple pie and you are somewhat embarrassed, you are on the right track

#### **Why a vision is important for partnership type of organizations?**

- Finds and identifies the common ground for member organizations to work together

- Builds commitment to the purpose and work -a sense of ownership
- Provides the direction for individual and member organization decision making
- Focuses the group's work and decision making at meetings and when confronted with new opportunities or crisis
- Becomes a touchstone for conflict resolution
- Brings clarity to the activities of the group
- Inspires and motivates
- Becomes the foundation for the TS's organizational culture

#### **Examples of components of vision statements:**

- Respect and build on each others strengths
- Consistency between our plans and actions
- A willingness to share
- Disagree without fear
- Celebrate our diversity
- Commitment to a long-term strategy
- We want to live our values
- Treat each person in a unique way
- Overcome hierarchy and rank to create a democratic organization
- A positive attitude, less energy on bad situations
- We want to see caring and love in all our actions
- Every person is a leader
- Work as a high performing team
- Each person feels valued and respected
- Provide meaningful work
- Each person and organization has the right to say no
- Control of our own destiny
- Freedom to fail. People are shot only for not trying
- Honesty at all times
- Empathy for others pain
- Each person is heard and understood
- Positive social change
- Build an oppression-free organization culture
- As strong as our weakest link

#### **Why doesn't everybody have a vision?**

Often people feel that the time spent in preparation for action - primarily planning, is a waste of time and feels "slow" to them but in reality such preparation enables "fast" activity during the execution phase. Planning and thoughtful preparation reduces the time and energy lost in figuring out things through trial and error, and brings role and task clarity to all the members and staff involved in executing projects and programmes.

*"A vision is not just a picture of what could be; it is an appeal to our better selves, a call to become something more." Rosabeth Moss Kanter (American management author and consultant)*

**\* A Trans-organizational System (TS) is:**

TSs are functional social systems existing between single organizations and societal systems. They are able to make decisions and perform tasks on behalf of their member organizations, although members maintain their separate organizational identities and goals.

**4- Opportunity Knocks**

You never know when opportunity can arise out of a bad situation. To most of us, a forest fire is a pretty bad scenario; but not to certain types of beetles. These beetles have special infrared receptors that can detect the heat from a forest fire. When they discover the aftermath of a forest fire, they move right in and lay their eggs in the forest. They know that when the eggs hatch, the larvae can feed off of the dead wood.

In the world of nature there are countless examples of how good comes from something we perceive as bad. I suppose it is only bad because we want something other than the result we got. When we look at a situation calmly and sum up what is really going on, perhaps there is really some good in it and we can use this to our advantage.

(Source: Bleckmann, H.J., Schmitz, H. and von der Emde, G., Nature as a model for technical sensors, J. Comp. Physiol. A., 190:971-981, 2004.)

**5- New articles on the web!**

A new article was posted at the website IDM Best Practices for health promotion, public health and population health entitled January 2005 Reflection by Joan Roberts: From Best Practices to Best Processes. You can find it here:

<http://www.idmbestpractices.ca/idm.php?content=archreflect#JoanRobertsReflect2>

A new one will be posted at the Charity Village website soon. The article focuses on my Tri-process model for TS effectiveness. It will be posted in the research section of <http://www.charityvillage.com/> and featured in their weekly newsletter.

As well, you can read a great review of my book Alliances Coalitions and Partnerships, building Collaborative Organizations from Charity Village. Go to <http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/books/bkrev125.html>. The book is now available in the UK and Ireland and I am selling copies across the US and Europe. The US Centre for Disease Control just purchased a copy for every state department of health in the U.S. Get yours at <http://www.joanroberts.com/acpbcobk.htm>.

Happy Spring!

Joan

Joan Roberts Consulting

416-523-0390

[joanroberts@sympatico.ca](mailto:joanroberts@sympatico.ca)

[www.joanroberts.com](http://www.joanroberts.com)

“Providing customized solutions for collaborative processes”