

The Worthy Organization

By Robert J Ballantyne
with Sherry S Jennings



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Read This First

This book is written for you if you are planning to create a new organization of volunteers, or revitalize an association, society or club. Over the years we've discovered methods to enroll and inspire people in the business of creating a better world. What follows is meant to be practical techniques that will work for you. For your part, you will need to be able to clarify what your organization must achieve and be willing to both use the material here, and understand the principles so that the techniques can be adapted for your special situation.

Much of this I (Robert) discovered by observing people wiser than myself. The advantage of this ebook is that we can learn from your experience and update the content. Then anyone who buys a copy of the book may download the latest version. So, please write and tell us what worked for you, and what did not. Describe what wonderful new techniques you discover. The email for collecting information related to this book is worthyorg@gmail.com.

This book began as a series of essays that Robert Ballantyne had written to instruct staff and colleagues with solutions to organizational problems. Therefore, when the pronoun, 'I' is used in the text, it means 'Robert.' When Sherry Jennings began adding

her experiences and anecdotes, she is identified by name. Our hope is that the voice of this collaboration is not too confusing for the reader.

Organizations often lose leadership and community support because of internal strife; not because anything was wrong with the original mission, or because the need for the benefits no longer exists. If you believe these issues are undermining your organization's mission, please address those issues now. They won't go away on their own. There is an old maxim that says, *if you don't deal with the problem, the problem deals with you.*



Organizations lose momentum and relevance because of internal strife; not because there is a lack of need. — R.J. Ballantyne

Most organizations begin with a group of like-minded people who band together for some worthy purpose. An organized group of friends and colleagues can have a lot of fun working and creating. If the group is motivated and inspired, together they can change the world. So what happens in the course of working together and who is responsible for the strife? It is frustrating working with people. *People don't do what they are supposed to do; they do what they do.* But we need them. We need them to work with and create with us.



People don't do what they are supposed to do; they do what they do. — R.J. Ballantyne

Often, people really care but don't know how to cope and we see volunteers being discouraged by:

- conflict,
- dashed expectations
- chaotic or dysfunctional organization
- burnout, and
- mismanagement of the funds.

This book is about organizing any association, club or society that you and your friends want to start or improve. The techniques described here will work for any organization, small or large, that requires a corps of volunteers or members. In this e-book I may talk about associations, clubs and societies, or members and volunteers. The distinctions are not important. I start with the premise of organizations with volunteers that may or may not have staff support.

As this is being written governments everywhere are withdrawing support for many of the programs and institutions that provide the quality of life that we wish to enjoy. More and more, we will come to count on our nonprofit facilities and organizations to fill an ever-widening gap of public services. As a member of your community, I need you to learn how to be successful with your organizational projects and initiatives.

Over the years I have been drawn to participate in leadership roles to support tourism and civic boosterism organizations, professional societies, astronomy clubs, educational institutions, and environmental organizations. Although the causes may be different, the issues and techniques of successfully organizing people are always similar.

Participants (volunteers) need to be:

- recruited,
- trained,
- motivated and
- rewarded or recognized.

The ongoing program needs to:

- inspire,
- produce accomplishment, and
- be enjoyable for the people doing the work.

Other considerations:

- Often money needs to be raised.
- To enjoy long-term success, the organization should be fair and democratic, and
- The leadership seeks to draw the best ideas from among the members.

Wonderful things happen in our community when an organization is successful. This book began as a collection of essays that I wrote over the years as a result of my experience with several volunteer organizations. Because much of the philosophical approach arises from my consulting practice and volunteer experience, I probably know you and your struggle. In that sense, this e-book is *crowd-sourced* and a collaborative reference. I encourage you to experiment with what's provided and respond to me about what worked and what didn't. Perhaps you discovered another approach that worked better for your situation. If you don't mind, I'd like to continually update this e-book with your contributions.

If you are like me, chances are that you won't open this book at the beginning and sit down to read the whole text. Probably you looked at the table of contents and selected a section of interest. As you feel the need you will cherry pick ideas from other chapters. If this is the case, please skim the whole work. We are beginning a dialogue about organization and the individual parts need to function together. You may not use all of the tools in this toolbox, but you should know what they are and how they might serve you.

My friend, the late Tony Barrett, was one of the founders of Pollution Probe in Canada during the tumultuous 1970s. This feisty organization had offices down the hall from the great media guru, Marshall McLuhan. McLuhan became interested in the passion of these young environmentalists

and was a frequent visitor.

On one of these visits, McLuhan listened to a series of atrocities polluters were perpetrating upon the pristine Canadian landscape. After hearing what the Probe activists wanted the public to do about it, McLuhan interrupted, “I know that you probably don’t want to hear any advice from an old guy like me, but Tony, people don’t like to be *should-upon*.” I think about that advice whenever I presume to try to tell folks what they should do. By reading this you are inviting me to should-upon you. I consider it a privilege and I am grateful.