

Creating a Leadership Development Program for Business and Community Leaders

Leonard A. Eason, C.I.D.
Roger Slater, Ph. D.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership development is a challenge to the people of any area. One area that has responded to this need is in West Central Georgia. The following is a description of the Area Resource Development Program (ARDP) which has been created by local volunteers from local business and industrial firms and governmental and educational institutions.

Simply stated, ARDP's general purposes are: (1) to inform participants of the local resources and services available to them such as business development, governmental, educational, workforce development, social and cultural, and (2) to encourage the use of these resources and services to foster the personal and professional development of the participant which, in turn, will serve to increase his/her business and community leadership potential. By bringing together today's and tomorrow's leaders, the program strives to create the opportunity for both to exchange ideas and information. This exchange can result in benefit to both and, concurrently, enhance the continuity of leadership.

BACKGROUND

During the spring and summer of 1990, the ARDP program and the organization were developed. The program was designed and developed to accomplish the following four major objectives:

- To encourage business and industrial firms, governmental organizations and providers of educational services to become aware of and use previously overlooked local resources that could enhance their success and role in the community.
- To create closer bonds and promote greater cooperation between West Georgia Tech, LaGrange College, local governments, and the business and industrial community.

- To encourage transient industrial leadership to put down roots in the local community.

- To broaden and strengthen the pool of future business and community leaders.

Focused on these objectives, six major subject areas were identified from which all featured topics would be drawn. They were:

- How to be Competitive in a Global Business Environment
- The Importance of Strategic Planning
- Customer Related Issues
- Employee Involvement
- Communications — A New Challenge
- Health and Safety Issues.

Specific topics were selected based on the mix and type of business and industrial organizations that comprise the economic base of LaGrange and the surrounding area. These topics were based on current issues and future trends that could impact the competitiveness of the firms and the stability of the area's economic structure. Speakers for each topic were identified, and dates and sites were assigned for each presentation. The first session was held on campus at LaGrange College on September 24, 1990.

HOW ARDP WORKS

Twelve topics were developed and presented individually on consecutive Monday evenings at either LaGrange College or West Georgia Tech. At 5:30 p.m., the host school provided a fifteen minute presentation on some aspect of its services and operations. For example, LaGrange College presented information on its cultural programs, MBA Program and sports and community recreation. West Georgia Tech provided information on business/industry training programs such as World Class Manufacturing and Statistical Process Control, The Quick Start Program for new and expanding industries, and the Adult Literacy Program. Subsequently, representatives of business, industry, govern-

ment or education introduced themselves and informed participants of their role in the organization and described their products and/or services. Following a catered dinner break of approximately thirty minutes, the featured speaker addressed the gathering on one of the topics. The presentation was followed by a period of open discussion and an open mixer to close. The purpose of the mixer and discussion session were to establish a format and create an opportunity for today's leaders to exchange ideas and information with the leaders of tomorrow. The weekly meetings usually adjourned between 7:30 and 8:00 p.m.

Each participant paid a \$195 fee for the twelve sessions. The fee covered the cost of the catered meals, program promotion and a small gratuity for speakers. Additionally, the residual funds, after expenses, were divided equally between the two host schools; in 1990, each school received \$1,000. These funds are used to provide scholarships at the discretion of each institution's administration.

With special approval, additional assignments, and payment of normal tuition, selected participants have the option for undergraduate or graduate credit from LaGrange College. This credit is provided through the Business Department. The participant registers for a five hour course of independent study, attends all ARDP training sessions, and is assigned a topic to research and report upon. The student submits the research/term paper to the course instructor for evaluation. During 1990, three participants opted for this additional credit, one graduate student and two undergraduate students.

HOW PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED

Selection criteria included success in chosen field, willingness to serve the community, and demonstrated leadership qualities such as intelligence, integrity, loyalty, excellent communications and interpersonal skills. Nominations were accepted from both public and private sectors. The Steering Committee selects forty participants each year. Nominees not selected one year may receive preference for selection a subsequent year. The purpose of limiting the number of participants is to

encourage communication and full participation.

EVALUATION

Participants were asked to evaluate each session as well as provide an overall evaluation of the program at the conclusion of the final session. The results of the evaluations were impressive, and they provide the basis for the following conclusions:

- Participation in ARDP provided a positive personal growth experience to each participant.
- The participants demonstrated a strong willingness to learn and explore new ideas.
- The availability and objectives of the program must be widely communicated and aggressively promoted.
- The selection process provided the type, quality and quantity of participants for the program.
- The purpose of ARDP, as stated, is appropriate.
- The program provided an excellent format for participants to gain an increased level of general knowledge of the community's economic base.
- Participants had numerous opportunities for personal and professional networking. They eagerly shared their experiences and ideas in class.
- The program recognized the value of the contribution of participants to their own development as well as the development of the group.
- Many participants discovered training opportunities and resources available locally that were previously not considered due to lack of visibility. Such resources included:
 - Activities available at the Lamar Dodd Art Center.
 - The existence of the LaGrange College MBA Program.
 - AUTOCAD Training opportunities at West Georgia Tech.
 - West Georgia Tech's World Class Manufacturing and Statistical Process Control industry on-site training programs.
- For future courses, consideration should be given to reducing the number of sessions from twelve to ten and completing the program prior to Thanksgiving. Additionally, a one or two week break in the middle would be useful for those whose jobs require travel. Twelve consecutive weeks with no break does

not allow the necessary travel flexibility some participants require.

CONCLUSIONS

The ARDP is a successful, innovative, model leadership development program for business and community leaders that is easily adaptable to other community settings. The program was designed to demonstrate the process of partnership and its importance in achieving its leadership development goals. Programs such as ARDP that offer community leadership development opportunities will certainly make a substantial contribution to the success of the next generation of business and community leaders.

Leonard A. Eason, C.I.D.

Mr. Eason is Director of the Business Development Center of West Georgia Tech. He is a Certified Industrial Developer. Additionally, he has earned the Certified Economic Developer Trainer (CEDT) designation from the State of Georgia. His Bachelor's Degree in Political Science was obtained from the University of Nebraska at Omaha in 1970, and he earned a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science in 1972 from Auburn University. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute. He can be reached at 404/883-8324.

J. Roger Slater, Ph.D.

Dr. Slater is President of West Georgia Technical Institute. He has been responsible for the direction and total operation and management of the institution since his arrival in 1983. Prior to assuming his current position, Dr. Slater served as Assistant Director of Carroll County Area Vocational-Technical School and Coordinator of Postsecondary Education at Walker County Area Vocational-Technical School. His Doctor of Philosophy in Vocational Leadership was obtained from Georgia State University in August of 1987. He can be reached at 404/883-8324.

Volunteers: How To Get Them, Train Them and Keep Them

Peter J. Murk, Ph. D.
Jane F. Stephan

INTRODUCTION

Voluntarism embodies a spirit of willingness (even eagerness) on the part of volunteers to contribute their time, talents, and energies without pay. The mission of a volunteer, according to Isley (1989), begins with a strong commitment to an agency or organization, often without any type of binding agreement, but soon develops into a loyalty stronger than any written document. The volunteer does not think in terms of sacrifice but instead sees rewards that go beyond the financial. However volunteers sacrifice much, in terms of time spent and energies given to a project. Because of this, successful volunteer experience hinges on the mutual satisfaction of meeting volunteer and organizational needs. (*Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education* p. 103).

MOTIVATING AND RETAINING VOLUNTEERS

Knowing why people volunteer their time and talents is important to understanding volunteer motivation and involvement. People who volunteer often do so because they were asked directly by their spouse, a friend or colleagues. Twenty-nine (29%) percent volunteer because a family member or loved one was involved or participated in the project. Thirty-one (31%) percent volunteered because they belonged to a group which participated in a voluntary project. Only six (6%) percent volunteered due to a newspaper advertisement or media information request for volunteers.

The 1987 *Volunteer Survey*, conducted by The National Volunteer Center, revealed that the majority (97%) of people who volunteer do so because they want to help others, because they enjoy the work (93%), and because they