

Partnerships

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With the new millennium well under way, managers must continually examine established managerial philosophies and techniques. Outdated and ineffective procedures are relinquished and replaced by innovative approaches. A prime example of this phenomenon is the effective cultivation, establishment, and operation of partnerships.

Peter F. Drucker, the “father of modern management,” encourages managers to consider the complexity of issues facing society and understand that long-term solutions will be possible only through cooperatives, alliances, joint ventures, and partnerships. “All institutions, including governments, churches, universities, and so on, will become more interdependent, more market- and customer-driven” (Drucker, 1997, p. 18).

This chapter will cover three broad areas:

- General partnership information;
- Types of partnerships;
- Partnership processes.

General Partnership Information

The delivery systems for park and recreation services encompass governmental agencies, for-profit enterprises, and nonprofit associations. The relaxation of the boundaries in these three sectors has been partly in *response to* and partly *responsible for* the rise of coordinated and collaborative initiatives. These relationships have been a part of the park and recreation field since its inception, and they have recently mushroomed into one of the overarching themes of the park and recreation field, promising to be a primary management tool for delivering recreation services in the future. Partnerships exist among entities that deliver services and among those entities that support service delivery. Third parties, such as the United Way or the Center for Disease Control Foundation, may negotiate the partnership or in some way enhance the cooperation of the partners.

“Partnership” has become an umbrella term that includes *agreements, cooperative ventures, joint arrangements, alliances, collaborations, and coalitions*.

In the past, partnerships were defined as the voluntary pooling of resources (labor, money, information, etc.) between two or more parties to achieve collaborative goals. While that is a useful starting point, it fails to highlight some key elements of partnerships. The power of partnerships is in bringing together interested parties with diverse, yet complementary, skills and resources around a shared vision that none of the actors could realize by themselves. Partnerships can bring many benefits, but making them work—and optimizing their efficiency and effectiveness—can be a challenge (Bell & Stokes, 2001). Today, partnerships are characterized by their durability, inclusiveness, sense of focused cooperation, and flexibility. Each partner should have a high level of intimacy and interaction based on trust and a commitment to common goals. What better example could parks and recreation professionals have than the Ahrens Institute that houses the National Recreation and Park Association headquarters? This facility was built as a result of agreements among local, state and federal public agencies, a non-profit agency, and a private land development company.

A state-of-the-art definition of partnerships includes five elements.

- They are voluntary.
- Two or more parties contribute a wide variety of resources.
- The partnership is based on common, or at least compatible, goals.
- There exists an ongoing and close relationship among partners.
- There is openness for working together in the future.

Extent of Partnerships

Although public park and recreation organizations have partnered with schools, churches, and groups in

the nonprofit sector for some time, it was not until the mid-1970s that park and recreation leaders began to realize even greater potential for cooperative ventures. Privatization, the movement toward turning over some of the responsibilities of the public sector to commercial providers, fueled partnerships between local park and recreation departments and large and small commercial enterprises. Indeed, Thomas M. Farrell, 2007 National Recreation and Park Association President, highlighted partnerships as “the success story that has had a lasting impact on me while serving the association” (Farrell, 2007, p. 2). Farrell went on to herald the future of partnerships in parks and recreation. The last decade of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st century have demonstrated new alliances between park and recreation service providers in every possible situation. Partnership forms and configurations appear to be *limited only* by the imagination and willingness of the parties involved.

Benefits of Partnerships

Coordinated and collaborative efforts are much more common now largely because of their proven benefits. Constituents expect more and better goods and services from the public, nonprofit, or commercial providers that serve them. At the same time, some of the traditional streams of fiscal resources have been eliminated or reduced. As resources become more limited and technology and information management becomes more complex, park and recreation managers need to have access to a broad spectrum of skills, tools, and information. These and other factors have encouraged the growth of partnerships.

Coordinated efforts may allow organizations to *offer* new park and recreation services, *enhance* current services, and *maintain* services threatened by loss of resources. Partnerships specifically contribute by stretching existing resources and accessing additional resources such as:

- staff (not only to increase the numbers of staff, but to access the special knowledge, abilities, perspectives, and certifications of staff). One agency might need the knowledge and skills of a marketing specialist for a limited period of time. In exchange, the agency could offer the use of a staff member who holds credentials for applying pesticides.
- facilities. For instance, agencies can exchange the use of an outdoor swimming pool for the use of an indoor fitness area.
- equipment. The use of a wood chipper following an ice storm might be used by an agency that does not currently own one. An agreement

might be reached that in the future, the agency that owns the piece of equipment would be allowed to use the park pavilion for the annual agency summer party.

- financial resources. Two companies might split the cost of a fitness instructor if neither needs nor can afford a full time fitness instructor.

Partnerships also contribute by:

- reducing the duplication of services. A large hotel might allow the city parks and recreation the use of their indoor pool for swimming lessons in the winter. This would provide a service without the use of the construction of an additional indoor swimming pool in the community.
- streamlining organizations. A city utilities department could include in their mailed billing statement a community survey for the park and recreation department.
- heightening organization credibility. Public school systems often refer to their joint use of facilities in their efforts to demonstrate responsible fiscal management.
- increasing organization visibility. One local youth service organization might agree to sell fundraising items in exchange for some money and the opportunity to share their “story” with community members.
- enhancing inter-organizational relationships. Even though the police department does not expect anything from the park and recreation department at the moment, they might provide security for a special event with the unwritten agreement that in the future, they might need some help with the youth softball program.
- increasing the networking opportunities of organizations and staff. A middle manager of a private golf equipment company might offer the local high school the use of golf carts for a golf tournament. The high school golf coach could agree to introduce the manager to his brother who is a well known golf celebrity who might be willing to be available at a future fundraiser.
- developing friendships among staff in different organizations. Staff from different organizations may simply have to work together on a joint dance program. Positive relationships would be likely, given similar interests and goals.
- increasing opportunities for personal and professional growth for staff. A company might agree to provide several employees who have an interest in fishing to help supervise a youth

fishing tournament. In return, those employees could realize how rewarding it is to share their time and skills with young people.

- contributing to community building. Strong communities are fertile ground for successful private companies, solid nonprofits and effective local government agencies. A community festival can bring together many organizations to make a successful event.

Qualities Influencing Partnership Success

The productivity and the efficiency of partnerships lie on a continuum. A few partnerships are so unproductive and problematic that it is not worth the participants' time and effort to continue. Fortunately, some partnerships fall at the other end of the spectrum, with the goals and objectives entirely met in a congenial and professional environment. The majority of partnerships lie somewhere between these two extremes—some of the objectives are met, but room for improvement exists. Several qualities are common to productive partnerships. The characteristics of productive partnerships can be classified into five categories: personal characteristics, interpersonal characteristics, organizational characteristics, operational characteristics, and other characteristics (Andereck, 1997).

Personal Characteristics

While most cooperative agreements are designed at the organization level, they are implemented at the personal level. Not only is it critical to have the right mix of people, it is also important to have a diversity of participants with different approaches to issues that generate a variety of solutions. At least a few strong leaders must be among the participants. A group with all strong leaders may be problematic, but it is important to have a few with the ability to influence others. Moreover, partnership salience is necessary for a good partnership. Members must feel that the issue or task is relevant, that they can contribute to a solution, and that they can benefit from the partnership.

Interpersonal Characteristics

The success of partnerships hinges on interactions between individuals. Under the heading of communication, qualities such as sharing information, active listening, and directness are found. Honesty, synergy, and dynamics are grouped under the general category of trust. The process of mutual learning and sharing of a vision with others in the cooperative efforts are particularly important to partnerships. Mutual adjustment is also a critical component because all cooperative ventures require members to make changes in conventional

ways of operating. Sometimes these are minor changes. However, in some cases, drastic new ways of thinking and acting are required.

Organizational characteristics

While it is necessary to have particular qualities at the personal level, these alone are insufficient. Support must be exhibited at the organizational level. Organizations must commit to the partnership, and they must show their commitment by freeing up staff from other responsibilities to allow them to work on new joint projects, allocating office space, and increasing travel allowances. Managers must be flexible in accounting and other procedures.

Operational Characteristics

This class of characteristics has to do with how joint ventures are implemented. The planning that is so important to partnerships includes the development of a joint mission, goals, and clearly defined objectives. A simple but critical operational characteristic that is crucial to the venture is establishing an appropriate meeting environment. Obviously, participants must be informed of regularly planned meetings well in advance. Productive conferences can be facilitated with an agenda of important items for discussion. Outcomes of the partnership, realized and unrealized, anticipated and unanticipated, should be discussed regularly.

Other Characteristics

Another common quality of productive collaborative projects is that managers must understand the timeliness of partnerships. Collaboration is now an accepted mode of operating. This was not always the case; the value of partnerships had to be proven. Today, there is an aura of support for partnering activities.

The compatibility of the partnering agencies' missions or "reasons for being" is also crucial to the relationship. If partners operate from drastically different philosophies, there is less likelihood of success. The missions of the cooperating agencies need not be identical or even similar. They do, however, need to be *compatible*. This is one of the reasons that agreements between two or more public recreation agencies tend to be particularly popular and highly productive. On the other hand, a private business with a strong profit motive and little commitment to community welfare may have difficulty maintaining a productive partnership with a public park and recreation agency that is committed to providing leisure opportunities for all of its constituents. Even in situations that involve significantly different philosophies, however, energetic and creative managers and staff can design and operate effective cooperative agreements.

In addition, there should be community concurrence with the department's new direction. For public agencies like parks and recreation departments, the financial advantages are tempered by the responsibility of ensuring that community members concur with the department's chosen direction. Unfortunately, this responsibility is the most overlooked aspect of corporate-partner feasibility research. When communities and companies neglect the public relations portion of their relationship early on, it limits their potential to work together and it may destroy public confidence in this form of partnership (Jackowski, 2001). A public agency should analyze the relationships it has built with its community stakeholders. Preparing this information at the beginning of the process allows key issues to come to the surface. A little research at the beginning of the project can eliminate embarrassment later.

Common qualities of nonproductive partnerships are not merely a mirror image of the qualities of productive partnerships. Certainly, some similarity exists, but different factors may impede the initial development or the maintenance of joint agreements. The lack of communication is by far the most common. Two other obstacles, the potential for losing control of the project and a lack of evaluations, result from the absence of regular communication. Without frequently scheduled communication focused on attaining goals and objectives, the possibility of losing control of the project increases. This is especially true of large public agencies that are engaged in hundreds of agreements on shared facilities, equipment, personnel, programs, and operations. They may simply not have the time and energy to adequately attend to partnership maintenance.

There are other barriers to productive partnerships.

Turf. Staff and administration may feel threatened by other agencies' or businesses' interest in working closely on projects. They may feel that the niche they have carved for themselves and their organization will be invaded and ultimately usurped.

Lack of trust. Just as personal relationships depend on an individual's ability to believe another person, so it is with organizational relationships. Trusting relationships built over a period of years are likely to be more resistant to threats. New partnerships without a track record of trust to validate them may be especially vulnerable. The potential of joint arrangements could be truncated before agreements are fully established and inevitable minor glitches corrected. Establishing trust may mean a great deal of research and a long series of honest, open discussions, but the work will pay off in the long run (Dahlgren, 2000).

Lack of continuity. Most often a partnership is, at least in the beginning, the offspring of two or three key people. These people accept the burden of nurturing the cooperation. In some cases, informed and committed alternates can compensate for the absence of key members. However, in some situations no one is prepared to take the place of the missing player and the partnership suffers.

Unequal distribution of benefits and costs. This issue is especially relevant to organizations that run programs and own facilities. For example, park and recreation districts often cooperate with local private companies to cosponsor activities in the local park. The recreation program divisions of the park and recreation districts benefit and the private partners benefit. Unfortunately, the divisions responsible for the facilities and grounds maintenance may have added responsibility without any direct benefits.

Fear of change. A subtle but profound impediment is the aversion to thinking and operating differently. Significant risk is inherent in all new endeavors, and partnerships are no exception. The lack of vision and willingness to change have quashed thousands of agreements, aborted untold partnership potential, and ultimately reduced the possibility of meeting the needs of park and recreation agency constituents.

Fortunately, committed and creative managers and staff can overcome nearly all real and perceived barriers. Some barriers will require more effort than others. In most cases, the benefits far outweigh the costs. However, there are occasions when the potential payoffs are insufficient to tip the scales in favor of embarking on cooperative ventures.

Types of Partnerships

Partnerships are primarily function related and can be classified as:

- joint programs and special events;
- social issue ventures;
- joint publications;
- cooperative research;
- joint facility use;
- facility development and management;
- staffing;
- cooperative purchasing agreements;
- grants;
- donations;
- corporate sponsorships;
- community councils;
- franchising; and
- marketing.

Some of the most successful partnerships are found in facility use and programming. Cooperative programming efforts include innovative use of joint programs, as well as financial partnerships for sponsorships and special events. (For marketing partnerships, see Chapter 15.)

Joint Programs and Special Events

Today, most successful programs and special events incorporate ingredients of joint planning and execution. Program planning for community recreation agencies works most efficiently as a joint venture in which the community at large, program participants, the professional staff, and governing bodies assume joint responsibility for both planning and execution of activities. This combined effort enhances the chance that the park and recreation organization meets the needs of its constituents.

Wine consumption and wine-related activities have enjoyed a 15-year period of growth in the United States. Some parks and recreation agencies have begun to offer their own wine-related events. Of course, this cannot be accomplished without a number of partners. The Santa Clara Art and Wine Festival is the offspring of the union of the Santa Clara Parks and Recreation Department, regional artists, restaurateurs, wine dealers, and vintners. Each year, the event takes place in the department's Central Park and includes over a hundred artists, booths with food and drink, live entertainment, and a supervised "playground with carnival games, face-painting and a petting zoo" (Walsh, 2008, p. 95). Not only does a vast array of community members benefit from the festival, but commercial food and wine vendors get much needed visibility, artists get the chance to show what they have to offer, and several other local nonprofit organizations are offered the opportunity to access large audiences for fundraising.

Imaginative leisure service agencies have recognized the love affair that Americans have with their automobiles and have parlayed that interest into exciting and profitable special events. The Wayne County Park and Recreation Department in Michigan jointly sponsors the Annual Hinds Park Cruise and Car Show with the Redford Rolling Thunder Car Cruisers Association. This event includes different types of automobiles including antique cars, street rods, muscle cars and contemporary cars and trucks. The park has a 12 mile road on which the agencies host a very popular cruise. The considerable proceeds go to the sponsoring agencies and other local organizations (Gilbert & Beason, 2007).

Social Issue Ventures

While many groups operate under a variety of titles, they share a common purpose: to coordinate the plan-

ning, development, and maintenance of community resources; and to address community problems, and issues. These types of partnerships may consist merely of communicated coexistence ("If you offer those resources or services, we'll offer these"), or they may go beyond that to active participation on joint projects. Some partnerships may be formally established and meet on a regular basis; others may be established on an *ad hoc* basis.

Indy Parks and Recreation (IPR) in Indianapolis IN is an example of a parks and recreation agency that is leading the way in creatively meeting a wide range of its citizens' needs. The agency sees itself as a social service agency, much like any traditional agency dealing with issues of crime, homelessness, poverty, and abuse. Like any large public parks and recreation agency, Indy Parks and Recreation is blessed with a variety of parks and facilities. Literally hundreds of programs are offered. One of the most successful approaches to alleviating social ills has been to incorporate existing social services into IPR's current offerings. A fine example is the Character Discovery Challenge Playground program that provides fun activities and free lunches in the parks. This is possible because of ongoing partnerships with the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the U. S. Department of Education, local public housing groups, churches, neighborhood associations, YMCAs, and schools. "Since 2005, Indy Parks and its partners have served more than 680,000 lunches" (Wynns, 2008, p. 77). Demonstrating a desire to serve its citizens and a willingness to venture into less-traditional parks and recreation services, the agency also joined efforts to open an emergency food pantry when a previous provider could not continue. Again, this was only possible by joining resources with the United Way and a variety of federal, state, and local food-related organizations. To round out this valuable joint venture, Indy Parks holds a number of food drives to keep the pantry filled (Wynns, 2008).

It has been noted by Stokols, Allen, & Bellingham (as cited in Henderson, December, 2000) that programs that are narrow in scope and rely solely on interventions aimed at individuals and small groups are not likely to affect change in complex social problems such as youth living in high-risk environments. Thus, major community issues such as growing health problems, physically-inactive children and adults, or inaccessibility to recreational facilities might be better addressed by multiple thrusts and the establishment of partnerships among diverse community members to focus on promoting better health through active behavior.

Joint Publications

One of the most effective partnerships is joint publication of programs and information directories. In the

for-profit sector, commercial enterprises have found that to attract tourists, it is highly effective to present the geographical area and the leisure opportunities there in a brochure or booklet. Similarly, directories are published by comparable businesses, such as day and resident-organized camping, private campgrounds, festivals, and celebrations. At the local level, directories, such as the comprehensive Leisure Services Directory in Detroit compiled by recreation faculty at Wayne State University (see Compendium 6-1), are very useful.

Park and recreation organizations have published their program brochures cooperatively. This allows for a more-professional publication, published for considerably less than what the total cost would have been, had each produced their own. Further, the dissemination of such information can be more extensive, resulting in more effective promotion. Some managers may not want to participate for fear of loss of organization and individual staff identity, as well as a concern for loss of participants due to competition. However, the benefits outweigh the threats. Joint calendars of events, whether separately published or placed in newspapers, can promote an organization's programs and services. Other joint promotional efforts that require partnering include "career days" at junior and senior high schools and colleges, and "job fairs," particularly at colleges, or even major special events. (See Compendium 6-2 for an example of joint marketing and Compendium 6-3 for an example of joint marketing guidelines.)

Cooperative Research

All planning, whether community-wide or by individual organization, requires needs assessments of various types, as well as surveys of constituent characteristics and preferences (see Chapter 7, Planning for Strategic Management; Chapter 8, Recreation Program Planning; and Chapter 11, Physical Resources Planning). Determining effectiveness of programs also requires constituency studies (see Chapter 8, Recreation Program Planning and Chapter 23, Evaluation). Most studies should be done cooperatively, since such partnering greatly enhances the studies in scope and quality. The inclusion of diverse perspectives has long been an effective research approach. For example, faculty at various universities (with or without the aid of students and/or classes) can provide valuable assessment services in exchange for the opportunity to put theory into practice.

Joint Facility Development and Management

Park and recreation specialists have developed facility use agreements, land and building leases, playground construction and maintenance agreements, land trusts, trails, and "adopt-a-park" programs.

Many organizations desire to offer new programs, but lack the necessary facilities within their organization. Faced with this scenario, creative professionals may consider partnerships. Contracts between schools and public park and recreation departments have been in place for years and are the norm rather than the exception. Many organizations have either implemented or are considering implementing policies for joint construction of facilities. The City Council in Staunton VA proposed that all school construction include gymnasium wings designed with access from outside the school, which would allow partial facility use for after-school programs by the local park and recreation department. Architectural designs like this reduce the concerns of school administrators and teachers about administrative office and classroom disturbances. Other successful partnerships with schools have shown that philosophies and missions can be modified to encourage partnering. Camp programs have built relationships with schools as an extension of the classroom (Schirick, 2001). Science teachers have used earth science and environmental education camps to increase students' learning abilities. Moreover, honor programs such as those established by the Ellensburg School District and the Leisure Services program at Central Washington University, use camps to build a sense of community and respect while rewarding achievement during the school year.

The ultimate goal in joint facility construction or use should be solving community problems and enhancing the quality of life for all constituents. An excellent example of a successful partnership is the joint use of facilities in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts. The Springfield YMCA, the New England Health & Racquet Club, a local church, and the city's park and recreation department formed a partnership to construct and operate a teen center. The new teen center discouraged several organizations that were providing leisure activities from building competing facilities and, at the same time, allowed for an increase in teen programming. Another successful venture is in Boise ID. The city provided funding, a research park provided land, and the West Family YMCA provided the operation of the Boise City Aquatic Center.

Americans are increasingly interested in returning to nature. Modern life in large cities presents various obstacles to such a yearning, but they are not insurmountable barriers. Parks and recreation agencies have joined forces with partners from the public, nonprofit, and commercial sectors to offer community gardens across North America. From Sacramento to Virginia and Texas to Toronto, public parks and open spaces are becoming sites where community members can enjoy nature and produce flowers and vegetables for their friends and families. Sacramento Parks and Recreation

made this a reality by collaborating with local nonprofits associated with gardening, local hardware stores, and seed and plant businesses (Needham, 2008).

In addition to fitness centers, community centers and multi-use school buildings that have been planned, developed, constructed, and maintained through partnerships, many “Friends of the Parks” programs have been established throughout the country. The best example for parks and recreation professionals is the model park developed by the Northern Virginia Park Authority that has the Ahrens Institute as its centerpiece. The planning and development was accomplished through numerous partnership agreements. Another case of a strong friends group is the Bushnell Park in Hartford CT and New Haven’s Green. Both parks have been fully restored through the efforts of a well-organized public-private partnership group. Two good examples of well-publicized friends of the park groups are the Parkway Partners Program in New Orleans and Riverfront Recapture in Connecticut. The nonprofit venture with the City of New Orleans Parkway and Park Commission and the citizens of New Orleans has revitalized the park and parkway system around New Orleans. Mikey’s Garden is an example of their fine work; this turned an abandoned inner-city lot into an inner-city paradise. At the same time, Riverfront Recapture has designed and built a network of unique parks and public recreational facilities along the Connecticut River.

Staffing

Staff training is one of the most common and logical opportunities for partnering, because most recreation and park organizations are too small to have sufficient staff numbers for workshops and cannot afford to hire experts to give individualized instruction. Training topics encompass *common operational needs*:

- updating information, technological understanding, and skills (see Chapter 14);
- better understanding the legal requirements for employment (see Chapter 16);
- measuring outcomes more effectively (see Chapter 23);
- meeting facility maintenance needs more efficiently and cost-effectively (see Chapter 13); and
- learning more about new budgeting systems (see Chapter 20).

Training topics also encompass *common operational needs*:

- changes in community demographics;
- societal leisure characteristics;

- behavioral elements in vandalism and deviancy; and
- disabilities and how to program more appropriately.

Professional organizations in state, regional, and national conferences address these topics, but it is frequently more desirable to have a local community in-service program sponsored by a number of organizations with mutual concerns and needs.

Some organizations have taken advantage of cooperative programs for personnel exchanges such as “loaned executives.” A key element in this type of partnership is matching the individual’s expertise to the need. For example, one organization might loan their professional fundraiser to another organization in exchange for the use of that organization’s expert on legal issues involving personnel. Private enterprises and associations may provide expertise in exchange for other services that otherwise would be too expensive for many public agencies.

Another possibility for partnering staff involves organizations with multiple facilities in different locations with limited recreation personnel. Some agencies have jointly hired one employee with the express purpose of providing recreation programs for all of their clients. A recreation director could have multiple programming responsibilities for several communities that share the expense. Some school districts share the same staff person for more than one school’s physical education, art, or music program. Without this cooperation on personnel, many organizations would not be able to provide the diversity of programs that they have.

Evaluation of staff also can be handled through a partnership. Northwest Arkansas had four communities who staffed lifeguards for pools. They had been paying outside agencies to evaluate the staff several times a season. Together they saved money by having the managers of one community evaluate the guards at another through a rotation system. Using the Red Cross forms (see Compendium 6-6), each manager made surprise visits to another’s pool, evaluated, and then consulted with the manager concerning what they saw. The communities reported significant savings while maintaining quality pool guards. Many types of financial partnerships exist, including sponsorships, fund raising, cooperative purchasing agreements, and grants (see also Chapter 19, Financial Management). Financial investment partnerships include providing matching grant money, assisting with bond campaigns, organizing foundations, and assisting with fund raising campaigns. Efforts to locate partnerships to improve financial capacity have increased since the late 1980s. Joint financial ventures began with the matching grant programs from the federal govern-

ment. Programs, such as pass-through funds to the states from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Community Development Block Grants programs, have allowed localities to obtain and develop land and property.

Financial partnerships may involve land leases or contractual obligations. A classic case of necessity being the mother of invention is the partnership that the Jefferson Parks and Recreation Department (JPRD) in Georgia has designed. Because Jefferson is a relatively-small community that attracts a large number of people from as far as 60 miles, the need for additional facilities was obvious. However, a new source of revenue would have to be found. JPRD director Ben Dillard convinced the city that the department could create and manage a low-power AM radio station. Although the station is still in its early stages, the revenue generated from advertising sales is allowing the endeavor to at least break even. Showing additional creativity, the station is 'staffed by three University of Georgia students, a retired disc jockey, and employees from the park and recreation department. Interns and part-time help are used whenever available; a handful of salespeople work on commission" (David, 2008, p. 45).

Cultivating partnerships with those who have the ability to raise funds is the key managers' responsibility. An ability to cooperate successfully with private and corporate foundations is a main ingredient in fundraising programs. Whether the program is a bond campaign, a grant writing project, or a fundraising project, the effective manager must build support. The generation of support for bond campaigns or fundraising programs also involves the enlistment of a strong volunteer base. Successful bond campaigns require the administration to establish a partnership with the community to develop a sense of ownership for the campaign.

Cooperative Purchasing Agreements

Cooperative purchasing agreements have been around for a long time. Joint purchasing agreements between two or more agencies minimize waste, reduce purchasing duplications, and employ economies of scale to reduce the price of goods and services. Obstacles to these arrangements include storage, distribution, and payment procedures. To alleviate these problems, partners may cooperate on the development of storage facilities, wholesalers may be convinced to deliver to multiple sites within the partnership, and purchasing procedures may be modified to fit the situation. The Texas Association of School Boards has designed a cooperative whereby governmental agencies, including park and recreation departments in municipalities, can purchase recreation-related goods at a lower price,

because the cooperative has purchased a large amount of the desired goods.

Sponsorship

Significant financial gains can be realized through joint sponsorships. Managers must realize that people and groups cosponsor events for specific purposes. Understanding diverse and sometimes complex motivations is an important first step in developing productive inter-organization cooperatives. Potwarka and McCarville (2007) state that "Sponsorship is not a philanthropic exercise. Sponsors do not provide resources and expect nothing in return, and, in fact, engage in sponsorship activities in order to pursue their own corporate goals" (p. 24). Thus, park and recreation agencies should recognize the value they bring to the partnership table. Since corporations, large and small, desire to "enhance their performance in the marketplace," the most valuable items leisure service agencies can deliver are groups of potential consumers. The bigger the venue and the larger the crowds, the more attractive the partnership is to the corporate world.

For numerous public leisure service agencies, sponsorships by entities in the commercial sector are important to the provision of many traditional activities and services; they are nearly essential to new programs. When the demand for SCUBA lessons increased at the Cobb County GA public aquatics facility, manager Bob McCallister collaborated with a local dive shop to provide the services. The pool had no one on staff with the proper certifications; however, the dive shop had just what was needed. Furthermore, the dive shop was willing to take care of registration, training and insurance.

In El Paso de Robles CA, recreation services manager Charlotte Gordon was faced with citizen demand that could not be delivered in a traditional fashion. She opted for arrangements with other providers that also had demands that could not be met. She states: "Partnering is absolutely essential. You can't be all things to all people, but when you partner with someone else, it's a win-win situation" (Mollencamp, 2008).

Many sponsors seek opportunities to increase public awareness of their products and services. Televised events such as golf tournaments allow sponsors continual exposure during commercial breaks. Innovative managers and staff design events that create sponsorship opportunities. Managers should realize that, be they event sponsors, title sponsors, or activity sponsors, sponsors come in three categories:

- local businesses, who desire to be seen as part of the community and who will sponsor small community events or teams (see Compendium 6-5 for local sport sponsorship example);

- national or regional companies with local offices who may sponsor larger events for image enhancement or to increase sales (see Compendium 6-6 for sponsorship policy and proposal format);
- national sponsors who may be interested in increased exposure in national markets. (Without at least the potential of being televised, some national corporate sponsors may be reluctant to invest in special events. Some national sponsors assist the regional office with increased marketing dollars, if an event has significant potential.)

The Harborfest of Norfolk VA is a good example of national sponsors willing to invest time and money in an event with a large regional appeal. Harborfest attracts more than 100,000 people and is co-sponsored by numerous national corporations. Each corporate sponsor establishes a stage on which nationally-known entertainers perform. Although there is no admission charge for this event, funds are generated through sales of food, beverages, and goods. (See Compendium 6-9 for a sponsorship proposal outline.)

The best sponsors are those that recognize and clearly communicate to their parks and recreation partners what they desire to receive through the sponsorship. Likewise, the leisure services partner must clearly communicate the goals that they have in the partnership. If, for example, the local parks and recreation department wants to host a small banquet for a handful of its volunteers, they may have trouble convincing a corporation to sponsor the event. On the other hand, if the department is hosting an event that will include a large number of executives in an upscale setting, corporate sponsors may be attracted because of the opportunity to showcase their companies and its goods and services.

Grants and Foundations

Grants are an important form of financial partnership. They are forged between a grantor and a grantee. In simple grants, a partnership is forged between a single grantor and a single grantee. The grantee agrees to provide a service or services in return for financial aid. In many cases, however, the request for funds is strengthened through the cooperation of several organizations committed to the same project. Grantors recognize the potential of partnerships for accomplishing more than the sum total accomplished by individual organizations.

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) is an example of an agency that must enter into agreements with local leisure service providers to accomplish their goal of promoting the game of tennis to young and old.

The USTA offers two grant programs, the Public Facility Funding grant and the Adopt-a-Court grant. The National Recreation and Park Association also partners with local parks and recreation agencies through their Tennis in the Parks grant program. By themselves, these national organizations lack the face-to-face contact with the large numbers of people that local agencies have on a daily basis (Bateman, 2008).

In contrast, most foundations, being legal entities, have specific procedures for applying for a grant. It is absolutely critical that such procedures be followed. They specify the parameters for grants, and the use of grant money must be within the stated objectives of the foundation. Also, some foundations provide grants only for local community projects, while others are national in scope. Because of this, a good place to look for grant funders is your own backyard. What corporations exist in your community, and what are their funding interests?

The trend for funding through grant proposals is to fund collaborating agencies. That is, they require that some sort of partnership be created to receive the money, rather than providing it to a single entity. There are several reasons for this. If the granting foundation can fund a project that involves partnerships, there is more stability. If one of the agencies receiving funding runs into a problem, there are other agencies that can continue the work. Also, it is good business to force agencies to partner: there is less duplication, and the money benefits a wider spectrum of the community. Third, most grant foundations want the program to continue after the funding runs out. There is a greater chance of continuance if more agencies, and thus stakeholders, are involved.

Foundations do not solicit funds from the general public, but have been established from private financial resources to maintain or aid activities that are of benefit to the general public. Foundations are closely regulated by law and must comply with their incorporation articles and bylaws, as well as the Internal Revenue Service requirements regarding distribution of funds.

Foundations may be established through inter-organization cooperation for specific purposes, allowing such foundations to accept donations that an individual organization, particularly a public agency, might not be able to accept. A Friends of the Parks group, like that organized in many communities, is an example of this. A foundation can eliminate much of the bureaucracy associated with public agencies, while providing an independent body indirectly connected to the organization, and at the same time contributing directly to the mission and goals of the organization. Governmental grant partnerships are quite extensive for acquisition of lands and for demonstration programs (see Chapter 19, Financial Management).

Just as important is the process of matching the grantors' and the grant-seekers' missions, goals, and objectives. When seeking any type of grant, managers must have a well-developed proposal that sets forth the desired outcomes, the proposed process for getting there, and the financial needs (see Chapter 23, Evaluation). Writing grant proposals is as much art as a science, and it behooves managers to either attend workshops on proposal writing, employ a person skilled in grant proposal writing, or hire a consultant.

Donations

Many different types of potential donors exist, including individuals, nonprofit associations such as service clubs, foundations, for-profit enterprises, and governmental agencies. The recipient (e.g., the park and recreation organization) solicits or proposes a particular project or need and requests financial support. The donor then provides financing. For example, a service club such as Kiwanis might "adopt a playground" and provide funds to purchase playground equipment and plants to beautify the area, as well as the personnel to install the equipment and plant the shrubbery or flowers. A sporting goods store might contribute a substantial discount for certain sports equipment for the youngsters in the t-ball program. A business might provide refreshments or prizes for a seniors' event or transportation for an outing to the zoo for children. Partnering in this manner is very effective public relations for both clubs and businesses, and it provides an opportunity for the donor to do something tangible for their community. Managers should always be on the alert for specific donors for these types of needs. The procedures are very simple - have a need, describe it, and solicit a willing donor!

Community Councils

Community councils are a special type of partnership. Councils consist of members who represent the diversity of the community, and are ideally suited to develop the practical solutions that respect different perspectives. There are essentially two purposes for which community councils are formed: physical planning and social planning. Their purpose is to come together, generally on a monthly basis, to identify for everyone what is occurring in the community in terms of events, sports, fundraisers, etc., to share resources, and to minimize duplication. When everyone knows what everyone else is doing, they can build a better, more-organized community. Park and recreation professionals must be full and active participants in community planning. While providing recreation areas and facilities and using discretionary time productively are not the answers to all of society's problems, they are a vital part of the solution (see Chapter 7).

The Recreation and Parks Council of Baltimore County MD is an example of a community council that functions to coordinate leisure services to all citizens in its area. The council consists of members from a variety of organizations including churches, schools, and civic agencies. Together, the members are able to bring diverse needs and perspectives to the attention of the Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks. On a smaller scale, the Lamar Recreation Board in Lamar CO advises the recreation director on the recreation needs of the community's citizens.

A particular area of concern is to understand the authority of community councils. While community councils are valuable entities that bring unique assets to the partnership, they are not in positions of authority. They can usually only provide information and advice; they cannot actually decide the allocation of resources. It is crucial for partners in community councils to be in agreement as to the exact roles of the members.

Franchising

"A franchise is a particular legal form of organization in which the development of a business concept and its execution are undertaken by two different legal entities" (Shane, 2005, p. 4). Each party invests in and receives benefits from the agreement. The franchisor (company granting the various business rights) has a proven method of expanding its operations and the franchisee (the party receiving the rights to sell) can exercise their entrepreneurial spirit and contribute their own hard work in a supportive business environment. McDonald's, General Motors, Holiday Inns and Coca-Cola are the most-visible examples of franchising systems. However, these comprise only a small fraction of the franchised businesses in the United States alone. Johnson (2007) indicates a significant growth trend in franchises in nearly all industry groupings. Especially strong growth was experienced in several sectors related to the leisure services. Services (including health and fitness), sports, lodging, travel, education and child-related sectors all experienced growth between 2000 and 2006.

Justice and Judd (1998) suggest several advantages and disadvantages to both parties. Franchisee advantages include:

- The new franchisee receives technical and managerial assistance that would otherwise be gained through expensive trial and error business practice.
- Quality control standards imposed by the "mother" business ensure that customers are consistently served a quality product.
- The franchisee needs less operating capital. New entrepreneurs often face insurmountable

obstacles in opening a business without financial assistance.

- The franchisee is guaranteed exclusive rights to a particular geographic area or market.

Franchisee disadvantages include:

- Franchisees may not fully understand the contract under which they operate and consequently not be successful.
- Services provided by the franchisor may be unusually costly.
- The performance of other franchisees may be sub-par. This can affect the overall profitability of the company—thereby negatively affecting all franchisees.
- The relationship between the parties may be unproductive if the franchisee becomes over dependent on the franchisor.

For the franchisor, advantages include:

- Franchisees tend to be very motivated, thus generating significant benefits to the franchisor.
- Franchised units are less attractive to unions thereby allowing for less labor expense and greater potential profits.
- Cost savings may accrue as a result of bulk purchasing.

Franchisor disadvantages are:

- Recruitment of solid franchisees can be difficult
- Communication between the parties may break down and lead to a variety of related problems.
- Franchisors must relinquish some of the control of the operations.

While franchising in the parks and recreation areas has largely remained a commercial endeavor, great potential exists for the concepts to be modified and adopted in the public and nonprofit parks and recreation sectors. The Joliet Park District of Joliet IL has a license agreement with a local entrepreneur to provide food services to the patrons of their recreation facility. The franchisor has access to a substantial market with a modest capital outlay. The park district is able to enhance their facility by providing a valuable service/product to their patrons. Executive Director Ron Dodd, noted that while there are some similarities in the method of operating, each franchise operation or license agreement is unique because of its location, product, target market, etc. Moreover, Dodd predicts that franchise agreements will become more and more common in the public sector.

The ownership of sports team franchises by governmental agencies has been a staple for some

time. Cities with considerable experience in this area include Springfield MO, Schenectady NY, Memphis TN, and Cleveland OH. Successful partnerships such as these are based on large-scale buy-in by the public in respect to facility development and maintenance, event attendance, and local corporate sponsorships. As with all franchise agreements, the expectations of each party (franchisor and franchisee) must be clearly communicated. Items and areas that must be addressed in the agreement development phase include, but are not limited to:

- player compensation;
- league and team fees;
- promotional expectations;
- franchisee training and evaluation;
- insurance;
- preparation and management of operating budgets;
- possible tax responsibilities;
- personnel operations;
- day-to-day and special event policies and procedures;
- division of revenue;
- agreement of facility use outside the franchisor's use.

Sports franchises are supported by various financial arrangements. Public funding usually comes through special taxes. Private citizens' contributions and corporate sponsorship are also essential to the franchise success. Communities may benefit from additional tourism-related revenues, increased nationwide visibility, and enhanced image.

Partnership Processes and Policies

Partnership Processes

Partnerships do not just happen! Park and recreation managers must develop processes and establish liaisons. They must then assess them carefully and objectively for their likelihood of success. Organizations should establish and put in writing their philosophy of inter-organization cooperation. Managers, as well as staff, must be aware of the organization's partnership philosophy and practices. The experiences gained in the process are of continuing value. The melding of cultures and the institutionalization of working relationships help establish guidelines for the future involvement of those considering a partnership. The following guidelines can help complete a successful partnership venture (Bell & Stokes, 2001).

1. Establish flexible, external funding that will provide a strong, positive incentive for the systematic design and implementation of a workable alliance. The funding organization must be willing to place emphasis on the desired outcome and not specific methods.
2. Demonstrate solid, visible, and continuous commitment from the top at all participating organizations. Without focused leadership, the project will most likely fail.
3. Develop the commitment of knowledgeable and experienced staff dedicated to making the partnership work in each organization. An effective partnership requires in-depth knowledge of each organization's respective capacities and culture.
4. Create mechanisms to pool and then flexibly and quickly assign funds. Some government and private companies require too much red tape to quickly manipulate funds.
 - Involve local personnel when creating new programming that is appropriate for, and of value to, the participants.

Advancing a common mission within such a web of partnerships and alliances can enable hundreds of thousands of individuals and families to have better, healthier, more productive lives.

Policies regarding cooperative agreements and working relationships should be set forth in a section in the policy manual of both organizations (see Compendium 6-8 for a sample of partnership policies).

Partnerships run the gamut from informal handshake understandings to formal agreements with expectations and procedures clearly delineated. Each type of agreement has its upside and its downside. Although there may be some movement from the informal to the formal, it would be most accurate to describe it as evolution rather than a revolution. Informal and formal agreements, and the majority of partnerships that fall between the extremes, are alive and well in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Partnership Policies

Formal agreements often require attorneys and administrators to design the policies and guidelines for the operation of the arrangement. There may be a quantitative method of measuring partners' contributions to and benefits of the joint operation. Moreover, communication may be formalized with scheduled reports from the participating members. On the other hand, some partnerships are little more than a general understanding of the practices and are sealed by a handshake between key people in each organization. Other admin-

istrators and front-line professionals may not even be aware of the partnership. Each form of partnership has its upside and its downside. There are advantages to *formal partnership*:

- The expectations are known by everyone or most everyone who is involved in the joint operation.
- Support and management of the partnership is less likely to be neglected.
- Conflicts may be less common and more easily resolved because of prior understandings and possible documentation.
- Evaluation of the success of the partnership may be more readily measured.
- The consistency and stability of the partnership is enhanced.

Advantages of *informal partnerships* include:

- There is ability to be spontaneous in initially arranging the partnership and subsequently modifying it.
- Involved parties may feel a greater sense of trust within the relationship.
- Communication may be more fluid and direct.
- It may be more effective for relationships that have been in place for a long time.

As previously noted, both formal and informal partnerships have the potential to work well depending on the situation. Frisby, Thibault, and Kikulis (2004) argue for a more formal and higher level of management in partnerships. Shaw and Allen (2006) undertook a case study of a partnership involving sports organizations. One of the members of the agreement described it as "a fairly loose arrangement . . . and that works out fine, really" (p. 217). Finally, Hardy, Phillips, and Lawrence (2003) argue for a balanced approach that avoids over-management, but allows for ongoing communication and joint management of the project.

Liaisons

Establishing and maintaining effective channels of communication are essential first steps in improving cooperation between park and recreation and other organizations. Good liaison can result in more productive efforts in accomplishing the missions of the organizations.

For both short-term programming and long-term planning and development, coordinating planning councils and inter-organization task forces can facilitate the accomplishment of organizational goals and objec-

tives and eliminate minor problems and barriers before they become serious.

Public liaisons are often established with such official local agencies as zoning commissions, city councils, county supervisors, and school boards. For instance, the Wheeling Park District in Wheeling IL operates with an Intergovernmental Committee. The elected board members serve as liaisons to the Village of Wheeling, the community's historical society, and the local school district. Each liaison is responsible for attending meetings and/or reviewing their agency's agendas. Every month, the board member liaison provides an oral report to the park district. Whenever possible, park and recreation organizations should strive to be represented on all development and subdivision control committees. This is especially important when the park and recreation service is not a department of the local government, but is an independent board or commission.

Appropriate liaison needs to be maintained with state and federal legislators, departments, and agencies, as well as community and civic organizations. Managers can identify the services and resources available through other public and social service organizations and construct a database of that information. Such a database can help personnel be more aware of the diverse resources at their disposal that might be available through environmental and social service organizations. Managers can initiate contacts with other departments, agencies, and organizations. Frequently, these groups do not know of the services and operation of the park and recreation organization and, hence, cannot effectively coordinate with them.

Liaison with many types of groups is one of the most effective public relations efforts. Managers can create liaisons with park and recreation organizations in adjoining jurisdictions or in jurisdictions having concurrent authority in the organization's service area. Park and recreation organizations need to assist and cooperate with federal, state, and local park and recreation organizations. A public park and recreation agency should have a working relationship with professional recreation state organizations, state legislative committees, and state and federal agencies concerned with aspects of community planning and operations.

"Community" as used here refers to the total local area or region, not only to the legal jurisdiction. Cooperative community planning means more than just sitting around the table and discussing generalities about what each organization is doing. "Community" implies a commitment by people to work together. It means actually working out plans jointly, before the fact, and considering the needs and resources, as well as the objectives, that integrate each organization into the community as a whole, whether the objectives are physical planning, social planning, or both.

Determining Partnership Potential

While partnerships offer many benefits, they may not be appropriate to every situation. There are six steps in forming partnerships (Uhlik, 1995). Many joint opportunities go unfilled due to the lack of a partnerships model for development and implementation. The following steps can lead to a successful partnership.

Step 1: Educate Yourself and Others to "Include Involvement"

This initial step enlightens managers and staff to the potential of partnerships. Competent persons will seek information of a general nature and specific to one's community regarding cooperative arrangements. This process is becoming increasingly easier as higher educational institutions do more research and publishing on this topic.

Step 2: Conduct a Needs Assessment and Resources Inventory

Inter-organization cooperation includes an informal needs assessment. Perhaps a lack of funds prohibits an organization from starting programs or building facilities, for example. In other cases, organizations may undertake organization-wide needs assessments. The needs are often prioritized and the most important addressed first (see Chapter 8 section on needs assessment).

An essential part of this step is an inventory of existing resources. Organizations may realize that the creative use of resources will accomplish their goals and objectives. It is more likely however, that the inventory will show that organizations have only some of the necessary resources. In the process, park and recreation organizations may discover resources they possess that can be indirectly helpful as bargaining elements with other interested parties.

Step 3: Identify Prospective Partners and Investigate Their Needs and Resources

The process of evaluating the community for potential partners with compatible philosophies may be the most time-consuming step of all. A process of elimination can help construct the list of possible partners. That is, an organization should initially consider all community groups and prominent individuals, and then individually eliminate them as they are ruled not feasible.

Managers must be careful not to prematurely eliminate potential partners based solely on assumptions or past experiences. Instead, they should examine potential partners' missions, goals, and objectives, as well as their public image and ways of operating.

Step 4: Compare and Contrast Needs and Resources

Consider the needs and resources of all potential associates not only for the obvious relationships, but also those that are less obvious and not so immediate. Inertia or resistance to change may have to be overcome at this point. For the long run, it is best to consider a policy of equal reciprocity. Unless all partners believe they are receiving benefits equal to the resources they are contributing, the relationship is doomed to struggle and is likely to be unsuccessful in fulfilling the needs of either party.

Step 5: Develop a Partnership Proposal Designed to "Achieve Success"

The initiator of the partnership must prepare a broad, but focused plan describing objectives, intentions, and outcomes, while emphasizing mutual benefits and shared resources. Care must be taken at this step, because most partnerships require a facilitator or driving force. However, no partnership will be productive if members feel they have little or no control.

Step 6: Propose a Partnership Agreement

Not all partnerships require a formal agreement, although Yoder (1996) found that there is a trend toward moving partnerships from informal verbal agreements to contract-based arrangements. Nevertheless, partners should know the expectations of all parties in the relationship. Organizations should develop partnership agreements that are dynamic and can be changed as the needs, resources, and objectives of participants change.

The Future of Partnerships

At the beginning of the 21st century, it is obvious that leisure service agencies can no longer accomplish their charge by "going it alone." Collaborations allow diverse partners to leverage their own resources with those of others to fulfill compatible and sometimes overlapping missions. Nowhere is this clearer than in the area of health and fitness. The United States and other developed countries face massive issues in health and fitness

that include obesity, chronic diseases, and stress linked to sedentary lifestyles. Moreover, a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2002 report states that "physical activity is fundamental to preventing disease and reducing the morbidity and mortality of many chronic diseases" (Nowlin, 2007, p. 63).

Leisure services at the national, state and local levels are involved in an impressive number of health related partnerships. The National Recreation and Park Association has initiated two collaborative programs, "Step Up to Health" and "Hearts and Parks." An example of a joint effort at the local level is the partnership between the Buffalo Grove Park District in Illinois and Northwest Community Healthcare (NCH), the parent company for Northwest Community Hospital. The Park District knew from its community assessment that there was a strong demand for a fitness center in the community. Unfortunately, the park district lacked the funds for such an endeavor. After exploring a new trend towards "medically-based" facilities, the Park District decided that its best option was to seek a hospital to "partner" with them on building and operating a center. NCH was that partner.

Eventually, the partnership has evolved into two separate agreements. The first is a "management" agreement, which gives NCH the responsibility for managing the center on behalf of the Buffalo Grove Park District. They hire all staff, establish program offerings, develop the marketing plan, and establish fees. Although the park district is not directly responsible for these functions, it meets with Fitness Center staff on a weekly basis to review financial and program performance. In addition, NCH and the Buffalo Grove Park District have entered into a lease agreement. NCH leases a small portion of the facility for its cardiac and physical therapy clinics. They are charged competitive rental rates for this lease.

Successful community partnerships can serve as models and inspiration for us all. Building the healthy, inclusive community begins with building a healthy human enterprise. Because everything begins with mission, the mission will emerge as the essential part of building the enterprise of the future.

All three sectors (public, private, and non-profit) are indispensable when they join forces and build and renew the community—the future community our children require and deserve.

Moving beyond their own walls, in powerful partnerships that can build and heal and unify, leaders are called to manage the dream of a country of healthy children, strong families, good schools, decent housing, and work that dignifies, all embraced by the cohesive community (Hesselbein, Goldsmith, Beckhard, & Schumbert, 1998, pp. 179–182).

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Ron Salski is the Executive Director for the Lake Bluff (Illinois) Park District and the 2009 Chairman of the Board for the Illinois Park and Recreation Association. Ron has been involved in park district administration since 1995 and has worked as a Recreation Supervisor at the Salt Creek Park District (Palatine IL); Superintendent of Recreation and Division Director at the Hoffman Estates Park District (Hoffman Estates IL); and Director of Park and Recreation Services at the Wheeling Park District (Wheeling IL). At Lake Bluff he is responsible for a \$5.9 million budget, 23 full-time staff, and facilities including an 18-hole golf course, two beaches, and 10 parks, as well as recreation, fitness, and paddle tennis facilities. His job requires him to coordinate with many community groups.

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