

ChangeUp e.mail Survey

Background

This survey was conducted by e.mail to 104 VCO organisations and groups located on the SCVS LIVO database. The exercise has involved very little financial outlay, apart from modest costs manually following up and 'chasing' response. This exercise will also enable us to update more accurate entries into the LIVO database.

The survey questionnaire was designed to cover the 6 key issues addressed in the Home Office guidelines for ChangeUp, but later Volunteer issues were removed from the survey because they might risk being duplicated by other research and analysis being carried out by Slough Volunteer Bureau and an Advisory Panel funded by the Infrastructure Consortium Steering Group.

With some prompting, a total of 25 responses to the survey were logged. This is higher than the norm for surveys of this nature, which usually elicit response in the 5-10% range. Of the 25 responses, five declined to participate either because they did not operate in Slough, or because they felt that their mode of operation was too small or outside the parameters of ChangeUp criteria.

The remaining 20 completed most of the '5 Point Scale' measures of importance on key issues identified, a total of 39 specific question areas which now have quantified values (Mean Scores) attached to them.

A word of caution however – 20 responses is a relatively small scale survey, so the results should only be viewed as indicative NOT conclusive.

The Sample

In the interests of anonymity of source, this summary will not name respondents, although of course the raw data and organisation details are on file.

The 20 respondents fell into three main groupings –

Large organisations with 10+ paid staff + volunteers (3)

Medium size organisations with 3-9 paid staff + volunteers (7)

Small organisations with less than 3 paid staff but often large complements of volunteers (10)

The cross-section of activities was broad, eg homelessness, children, young people, older people, Asian health, incurable diseases, volunteering, faith groups, cultural activities, keep fit activities, HIV, Refugee & Asylum seekers, counselling, community transport, disabilities, environment, BME. (Within this sample a relatively poor showing of only 3 BME groups).

Survey Details

Please note we have specified percentages of the total respondent base of 20. Mean Scores in the final column are calculated as per market research statistical guidelines fx/f formula where f is the frequency of response by value (1 thru 5) and x is the value allocated (1 to 5). Mean Scores are best seen as comparative indicators of importance, but a simple ranking exercise (top 10 issues) follows in the next section. As a basic interpretation the highest achievable Mean Score would be 5 (all respondents ticking box 5 'Extremely Important') and the lowest Mean Score would be 1 (all respondents ticking box 1).

Thus any Mean Score higher than 2.5 indicates that an important issue has been identified by respondents. Most of our Mean Scores are above this level, so the results overall are consistent and relevant even allowing for the small sample size.

e.mail survey – 20 Respondents % spread (of those expressing a value)

Workforce (Staff)	1 not important	2 slightly important	3 importa nt	4 very important	5 extremely important	Mean Score
Recruitment	15	25	25	20	10	3.58
Training & Development	5	20	15	35	15	3.00
Staff Induction Programmes	25	40	10	15	-	2.16

HR Support / Legal Advice	30	-	45	15	-	2.50
Payroll / Financial Controls	45	-	30	10	-	2.05
Management Skills	15	15	20	40	-	2.84
Disputes	30	35	15	10	-	2.05

Governance	1	2	3	4	5	Mean Score
Assessing your Board's effectiveness	10	10	40	25	-	2.94
Effective meetings & decision making	15	10	30	25	-	2.81
Building the Board	15	10	25	20	-	2.71
Governance & Management – understanding the difference	20	5	25	25	5	2.87
Roles & Responsibilities	15	5	30	25	5	3.00
Board & Committee Structures	15	5	40	10	-	2.64
Financial Responsibilities	20	-	30	15	10	2.93

Funding & Financing	1	2	3	4	5	Mean Score
Financial Planning	5	15	30	20	10	3.18
Managing Organisation Finances	15	15	20	20	10	2.94
Book keeping, accounts, payroll	20	10	25	20	5	2.75
Finding Funders	5	-	5	15	55	4.44
Training Finance Staff	15	15	25	15	5	2.73
Producing Successful Bids	5	5	15	15	40	4.00
Tendering for Contracts	20	20	15	5	10	2.50
Social Enterprise	15	15	15	15	10	2.86

Information & Computers (ICT)	1	2	3	4	5	Mean Score
Improving Staff IT Skills	10	20	15	20	20	3.23
Reliable Technical Support	15	10	5	15	35	3.56
Maintenance Costs	15	10	15	20	20	3.25
Designing a Website	15	15	25	15	10	2.87
Internet Access for people we serve	30	5	15	15	15	2.75
Internet Access for Research	20	20	15	15	5	2.53
IT Strategy for our Organisation	15	20	20	5	15	2.80

Improving Performance	1	2	3	4	5	Mean Score
Strategic Planning	10	10	5	35	15	3.46
Choosing and implementing a quality assurance system	30	15	15	10	10	2.44
Help with Business Planning	30	10	15	15	10	2.56
Skills Sharing networks	20	-	25	30	5	3.00
Organisational Skills and Capacity building advice & support	15	15	25	20	10	2.94
Marketing & Communications	10	15	25	20	25	3.37
Low Cost Premises	10	5	5	-	45	4.00
Establishing your values, purpose & vision	15	25	25	15	5	2.65
Understanding your communities' needs	15	10	25	30	10	3.11
Managing Projects	20	15	15	30	10	2.94

(Scales - 1 Not Important 2 Slightly Important 3 Important 4 Very Important 5 Extremely Important)

Top 10 Issues identified by Mean Score

It is reassuring to see that the highest scores relate to issues which echo commonsense and our understanding of FDO challenges and priorities.

1. Finding Funders (Mean Score 4.44)
- 2= Producing Successful Bids (Mean Score 4.00)
- 2= Low Cost Premises (Mean Score 4.00)
4. Workforce Recruitment (Mean Score 3.58)
5. ICT Reliable Technical Support (Mean Score (3.56)
6. Performance Improvement Strategic Planning (Mean Score 3.46)
7. Performance Improvement Marketing & Communications (Mean Score 3.37)
8. ICT Maintenance Costs (Mean Score 3.25)
9. ICT Improving Staff IT Skills (Mean Score 3.23)
10. Financial Planning (Mean Score 3.18)

Conclusions

We now have a useful (albeit not absolute) set of quantified indicators from a good cross section of Slough VCOs. The support issues appear to confirm (and in the case of at least 3 to further qualify) our planning exercise for local infrastructure within the remit of ChangeUp.

WDF 25th January 2006