

Systems-Centered Training News

Published by the Systems-Centered® Press

Newsletter Update • November 1, 2001

Update from: The SCTRI Management Group, October 2002 Meeting Developing and transforming our management structure.

The SCTRI Management Group just met for its four day fall meeting, taking what we think is an important step in SCTRI's organizational development. Continuing to apply the systems-centered methods to our organization lead the 23 of us to once again recreate our management structures, with the goal of freeing more energy for organizational work!

THE WORK. We got there by working for the first two days as an experiential group, subgrouping to surface and explore our implicit goals and the driving and restraining forces for taking up work roles in the organization (we started with Yvonne in her consultant role orienting us to the challenge of staying in clear relationship to role, goal and context).

As we worked, we identified the "corks" in each of us that interfere with working in our organizational roles, and the organizational structures that "stop up" energy, enthusiasm and creativity. The corks are defenses, and "popping" the corks freed up more and more energy.

We were able to put this energy to work in the second two days (with Ken Eisold as our consultant), assessing our organization and its structure and function, identifying what was working well and what was in the way of energy/information flow. In the process we highlighted the significance of supporting the vitality and authority of the Work Groups — the place where the work of the organization actually happens! Current SCTRI Work Groups are: Training and Development, Trainers' Group, Web Development, Public Relations/Membership, Research Action Group, Licensing Group, Conference 2002. (These last two are groups that come into existence to do a job, then dissolve themselves and reform as needed.)

The Steering Group has the job of potentiating linking throughout the organization so that the energy/information can be exchanged and the work groups can work. We realized that linking, a verb, is very different from trying to be the link, the noun! We ended up understanding that the more energy for work could be freed for the Work Groups, the more the Steering Group could be freed to do its work of managing the organization, so that the work groups were free to work!!

This felt like "popping the cork" in the organization, as we then with much excitement put together a new Steering Group structure.

THE OUTCOME. For the next 6 months (until the March 2002 Management Group Meeting) we reformed the Steering Group from 11 members to 4. The new core Steering Group takes the functions of keeping in touch with all segments of the organization, holding the overall vision and fundamental values of SCTRI, linking resources throughout our organization and being available for consultation to the various work groups. Its members are: Yvonne Agazarian, Susan Gantt, Dorothy Gibbons, Jon McCormick.

The Steering Group's resources are open to any work group in SCTRI, or members with ideas and energy for organizational development. The Steering Group has resources of vision, problem-solving, linking, clarifying. For example, the Training and Development Work Group is currently brainstorming potentials for a training track in organizational development. If this group feels it needs additional resources, or wants feedback on its ideas for next steps, or has energy and information on its work to link to the larger system, it sends a representative to the Steering Group to bring information or to seek consultation. Each work group has the authority and responsibility to take initiative in linking to the Steering Group with its work task.

Also, as the Steering group is paying attention to the overall organization, it may sense a difficulty, a lack of energy or resources in an area, or missing information and take the initiative to reach out to some function or work group in the organization.

Immediate feedback on our efforts came as the members leaving the old Steering Group discovered free energy for other organizational work!

AND YOU: if you have energy for a project within SCTRI, link up to a Work Group that is under way. If you don't know where to link, go to the Steering Group for a consult! After all, we members *are* the organization. Steering Group contact: Susan Gantt at (404)261-5559 ext. 1, or e-mail to sgantt@emory.edu.

*Claudia Byram and Susan Gantt
on behalf of the SCTRI Management Group*
