



THE DISCOVERY PROJECT

What is it?

The DISCOVERY PROJECT is useful for organizations seeking deeper understanding about the cultural, demographic, geographic, political, personal and financial forces at work that impact program outcomes. It can be helpful to nonprofits that are at a turning point in their work and to coalitions, which typically include stakeholders from different sectors who may have different expectations and assumptions of what needs to be accomplished to be successful.

The client works with the consultant to identify the key players and opinion leaders that drive or influence arts education advancement in a specified community. Through an intensive interview process, the study seeks answers to the question “What is going on?” (WIGO). A deep analysis of individual interviews with the key drivers and influencers enables the consultant to draw conclusions and make recommendations for the client’s use in planning and issues management.

The DISCOVERY PROJECT is adapted with permission from the Ascertainment Study process of Sharon Browning at Sharon Browning and Associates, an issues management and consensus planning consulting firm in Los Angeles. <http://sbassoc.org>

How is the study done?

Basic steps:

- Consultant meets with client to determine the purpose of the study and the outcomes desired. (Assumes that each study will be different, and the approach is not ‘cookie cutter.’)
- Consultant develops an interview protocol, based on the stated purpose. Interview questions are crafted to elicit factual statements (who, when, when, where, how—not getting into opinions of ‘why’).
- Client and Consultant agree on the list of stakeholders to be interviewed. (Could range from 5 – 15, depending on budget and other factors.)
- Client introduces consultant to interviewees and facilitates interview schedules.
- Consultant interviews stakeholders individually (in-person, phone, or skype). (A core value is confidentiality. All interviews are confidential, and individuals are not identified in the final report.)
- Consultant builds a map of the “What is going on?” territory (WIGO).
- Consultant analyses interviews through micro (individual) and macro (group) lens.
- Consultant writes a report of findings, with conclusion and recommendations.
- Consultant delivers report to client and/or client group.

Benefits of the DISCOVERY PROJECT

- Honors the voice and influence of all key players.
- Analyses based on fact (not opinion) ensures engagement that is deeper and more specific, less generic.
- Reveals underlying issues and perceptions that may have been ignored or unreported.
- Builds trusting relationships among stakeholders.
- Leads to positive change and more successful outcomes for the group.

Estimate of Time

Basis: 4 hours average per interviewee, which includes:

- Planning
- Interview
- Analysis
- Documentation/reporting

Estimate of cost (Does not include travel, if client prefers in-person interviews.)

- 5 stakeholder interviews (minimum) \$3,000.00
- 6 – 10 stakeholders \$5,000.00
- 11 – 15 stakeholders \$8,000.00