

Client Perceptions of Change Agent Productions

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Change Agent Productions is a social enterprise of the YMCA of Greater Long Beach Downtown Community Development which began in October, 2007, with a grant from the California Technology Foundation. Change Agent Productions (CAP) is comprised of professional digital media artists who work alongside urban youth who have graduated from the YMCA Youth Institute to carry out professional media projects. CAP was specifically designed to provide challenging, positive youth and career development opportunities for low-income, culturally-diverse high school and college-age youth. CAP work opportunities for youth are designed to build on the job skills training they received while in the Youth Institute and to help them more fully develop their business, academic, technical and social skills.

CAP was primarily designed to provide media services to community-based organizations and non-profits. CAP provides a wide-range of media services including video (documentaries, advertisements, public service announcements), graphics (corporate branding, brochures, professional reports, magazines), web (construction, layout, domain registration), audio-visual (on-site tech set-up and support, presentation equipment), and training (movie-making, graphic design, media lab consultation). CAP has created marketing materials and a website. In addition, they have advertised their services by exhibiting at numerous state (California School Age Consortium Conference, Best of Out-of-School Time Conference), national (National After-School Association Conference, Foundations Beyond School Hours Conference) and even at international conferences (YMCA Europe 2008 Festival, Social Capital Markets Conference). They have also broadened their local marketing efforts to reach more corporate clients by

having a booth at the Long Beach Sea Festival and by presenting to the Long Beach Lion's Club and Kiwanis Club.

CAP Staff and Interns

Change Agent Productions began operations with three full-time professional staff; one Art Director and two Digital Media Artists. It is worth noting that both of the digital media artists are themselves alumni of the YMCA Youth Institute. According to the original plan, CAP had also planned to employ two part-time Digital Media Artists who were added to the project in December, 2007 and January, 2008. Due to the amount of first-year business, both part-time staff were moved to full-time status.

Graduates from the YMCA Youth Institute must apply for internships with CAP by filling out an application, providing their grades and completing an interview. This process helps them to develop skills in obtaining a job. In the application, youth are asked to list their recent Youth Institute involvement, current extracurricular activities, number of hours per week they can work, the types of software and equipment they are most proficient with, and, the technology skills they would like to further develop. In addition, they are asked possible time obstacles, skills they would like to acquire, potential career fields and the relationship to CAP, and what they personally hope to accomplish through internship participation. They are selected for projects depending on their skill sets, availability, interests and acceptable grades. As of October 28, 2008, 40 high school and college-age youth had worked on at least one CAP project. The purpose of this study was to explore client perceptions of, and experiences with, Change Agent Productions during the first year of operation.

Methods

Data Collection and Sample

Between October, 2007 and October, 2008, CAP contracted for and completed agreed upon services for 19 clients. Representatives of all the organizations CAP worked for during this time period agreed to be interviewed for this study. Telephone interviews were completed by university research staff with 17 (89%) CAP clients between July and October, 2008. One participant who agreed to be interviewed left her organization before an interview could be scheduled and the other was not available for interview until after the report deadline. All of the information presented in the rest of this report is based on the 17 clients interviewed and, as such, does not represent all of the CAP contracts to-date.

According to the Client Intake forms, five contracts (29%) were for videos, five were solely for training (29%), three jobs (18%) were for graphic design, three (18%) entailed multiple job components (graphic design/AV support, graphic design/website development, digital media lab purchase, set-up and training), and one contract was for AV conference support. The gross revenue of these 17 projects was \$64,921.00. The costs of the jobs ranged from \$500.00 to \$20,177.00 with a mean of \$3,881.88 per job. The type of job that generated the most money was for the set-up and training of a digital media lab. Eleven (65%) organizations were located in Southern California, predominantly in Los Angeles county (73%), four (23%) were out-of-state (Texas, Michigan, New York), and two (12%) were located in Northern California.

Instrument

The interview guide was created by the researchers in consultation with CAP staff and a review of the literature regarding social enterprise. The survey used both open and closed-ended questions. The interview guide investigated how clients first heard about and the reasons why they selected CAP, their experiences in working with CAP, their perceptions of social enterprise, and suggestions for CAP improvement.

Results

CAP Selection Process

The most frequent way they learned about CAP was from colleagues who were familiar with or had worked with CAP or the YMCA Youth Institute (57%). Five (29%) organizations had prior relationships with the YMCA and four (23%) clients learned about the program through presentations at conferences and meetings. Comments included; “My colleague thought CAP might be useful for our state conference,” “A consultant working with us on a project recommended them,” “I work for the YMCA,” and “At a Region 11 High School Assets workshop.”

As noted earlier, the purpose and specifications of the jobs varied. A few were related to video; “Multi-media productions,” “They filmed two recording artists for our project,” and “Video coverage for our annual conference.” Some jobs entailed training; “To teach high school students media,” “Presentation for high school afterschool practitioners,” and “To train us to create the same program in Detroit.” Some jobs required graphics, “To do a marketing brochure for a state-wide afterschool training program we provide,” and “To produce a workforce magazine for youth.” A couple of jobs were related to audiovisual support; “CAP was in charge of audiovisual needs and

technical support for our education conference.” One job focused on “Website development and computer repair.”

Interviewees were then asked an open-ended question regarding the primary reasons they selected CAP for their job needs. Participants often noted more than one reason for selecting CAP. The most frequently endorsed reason (N = 10, 59%) for hiring CAP was related to supporting or sharing the mission of CAP. These responses included, “We wanted to help them because CAP is a non-profit organization,” “We believe in their work and wanted to give them an opportunity,” “I believe in supporting youth and youth development,” and “CAP is a youth-driven organization and has heavy participation from youth.” Prior positive working relationships or experiences with the YMCA was also a factor in the selection of CAP (35%). Comments included “It was another YMCA,” and “Partnership and relationship with Bob Cabeza and Brian Mendez.” Four (23%) interviewees also noted that CAP was highly recommended to them by others. Price was a consideration for only three (18%) organizations, as one said “We could afford it.” CAP expertise and customer service skills (18%) appeared to play some role in the selection process for two organizations; “They seemed committed to our project, flexible and uniquely willing to service our needs,” and “They had already been in operation for a number of years and we had heard success stories so we knew we should look at them to help create the program here.”

Interviewees were also asked to rate the extent to which each factor on a list influenced their decision to hire CAP. The response categories were “not at all,” “somewhat,” and “very much.” Higher scores meant greater influence. As shown below in Table 1, the factors that most often influenced clients’ decisions to hire CAP was their

organization's commitment to youth and the belief that CAP supported important youth programs. The least likely factors to influence hiring decisions were prior work with the YMCA and price/cost.

Table 1
Factors that Influenced Decision to Hire Change Agent Productions
(N = 17)

Factor	Mean	SD
Organization is Committed to Youth	2.94	.24
CAP Supports Important Youth Programs	2.71	.59
Belief In/Support for Social Enterprise	2.47	.72
Samples of CAP Work Products	2.12	.93
Positive Referrals from Past Clients	2.06	.97
Price/Cost	1.94	.77
Prior Work with YMCA	1.88	.99

Client Experiences with CAP

Participants were then asked a series of questions regarding their work experiences with CAP. First, using an open-ended question, they were asked to describe their work experiences with CAP. The most frequent response (N = 7, 41%) was related to the high quality of the product CAP produced. Comments included; "We were very impressed with the final product," "The information was well received by the students and feedback was really good. We will use them again," and "The actual training was remarkable and I loved that they brought youth in and helped increase their leadership skills." Six (35%) participants each commented on areas related to CAP commitment to and flexibility with the project and staff and youth expertise, skills, and professionalism. Examples related to these categories included; "We were impressed with the youth; they

were very committed and acted very responsible,” “Staff and youth went above and beyond expectations,” “They did whatever it took to get the website running in a small amount of time and they had a strong knowledge base in technical skills,” “They were very accommodating to our changing schedule,” and “They were accessible, easy to reach, followed-up and interacted professionally with conference participants.”

Three (18%) participants noted either positive interaction with staff or strong staff interpersonal skills, for example, “They were friendly and easy to work with,” and “They were fun and brought good energy.” Only one (6%) participant identified a challenge in response to this question; “The layout piece took a little longer than usual but we were more than willing to work with them. We’d request changes and they’d send us proofs without them. We had to do this several times. Due to email exchange, maybe it was difficult for them to interpret what I wanted.”

CAP Strengths

In response to a question regarding the most positive things about working with CAP, the most common theme was the inclusion of youth (N = 9, 53%). Comments reflecting this theme included; “CAP is a social enterprise and really promotes different skill sets for the youth of Long Beach,” “It was nice to have youth involved and they did a good job,” and “I loved the commitment to having youth in work, it is so important. They actually include youth and bring them everywhere. They don’t just say it, their actions show it.”

The second biggest strength identified was CAP’s commitment and professionalism (N = 8, 47%). These comments included; “Their professionalism and enthusiasm to please their clients,” “Professionalism, promptness, commitment and

organization,” and “Very thorough with materials and planning activities, CAP seemed like they had been doing it for a long time and were very well trained.”

Three (18%) interviewees each also noted flexibility, quality product and staff interpersonal skills as the most positive things about working with CAP. These comments included; “They were willing to work with us on new ideas and fit them into the program, and willing to change to meet our needs,” “CAP was very positive, good attitude and flexible, we never sensed negativity since they were very patient” and “The product, it gave a voice to the youth.”

CAP Challenges

Participants were also asked to share any challenges or difficulties they experienced when working with CAP. Eleven (65%) interviewees mentioned some challenges in working with staff. The most frequent type of challenge appeared to focus on communication (45%) which was often complicated by distance or having to do the majority of the work by e-mail. Examples of communication challenges were “In the beginning stages of the brochure planning there was a lot of back and forth until the vision became clear to everyone,” and “It was long distance and we needed to make sure that they understood what we wanted before they got there.” The remaining challenges were primarily related to business practices including billing, follow through and time management. These comments included “They are young in their business sense and maybe should take a class to increase this,” “We had to ask for the bill,” and “There was a scheduling conflict and at the last minute we needed to give them more time.” One participant each said that not having a Spanish-speaker available, restricted youth hours, and technical difficulties caused challenges on their project. One participant suggested

that CAP should clearly let clients know upfront that youth are in high school, so the limited number of hours interns might have for the project are clearly understood, particularly when there are tight project timelines.

Participants were then asked to rate CAP on various service aspects. The categories were 1 “Poor,” 2 “Fair,” 3 “Good,” and 4 “Excellent.” As shown in Table 2, clients rated CAP strongest in the customer service areas of inclusion of youth in work, commitment to the job, professionalism and job quality. They rated CAP lowest in the areas of responsiveness, communication and organization. However, it is worth noting that CAP was rated between “good” and “excellent” on every customer service item.

Table 2
Customer Service Ratings of Change Agent Productions
(N = 17)

Customer Service Area	Mean	SD
Inclusion of Youth in Work	4.00	.00
Commitment to the Job	3.82	.39
Professionalism	3.71	.47
Job Quality	3.71	.47
Promptness	3.65	.49
Follow Through	3.59	.62
Organization	3.53	.62
Communication	3.47	.51
Responsiveness	3.41	.51

Client Perceptions of and Interactions with CAP Professional Staff

Participants were then asked to describe their interactions with CAP professional staff. Overall, these comments were very positive. The most frequent theme (N = 14, 82%) reflected commitment and professionalism, emphasizing the willingness to “go the extra mile.” Comments included, “Willing to work with changing needs in a positive way,” “Very detail-oriented, customer focused and flexible,” “Accommodating and commitment to program was great,” “CAP was very attentive to our needs and what we were trying to do, in tune to the challenge and professional,” “I was very satisfied with the professionalism, efficiency, communication skills and the time management was great,” and “I worked with Brian and he was awesome. CAP staff was great. They had professional responsibility and communicated great. They were timely, calm, professional and concerned about client needs.”

Five (29%) participants also noted that CAP staff had strong interpersonal skills. Comments included “We interacted well together,” and “I met everyone but spent most of my time with Phyras. I was happy to have spent quality time with everyone there and they took a lot of time with me.” Others commented favorably on the expertise that CAP staff brought to the project, for example, “They knew what they were talking about and we had full confidence in their skills,” and “They asked a lot of questions and their expertise offered a different viewpoint that helped us.”

Three (18%) participants shared minor challenges, primarily in the areas of business management and communication. However, even when challenges were noted, these interviewees typically balanced them with positives. Challenges noted were “We got signals crossed with them about the job and had to ask for the bill,” “My main

contacts were Brian and Phyras. They were very professional but young in their business sense. I don't think they have a lot of experience, but they were really great to work with and I knew, if I needed to, I could go to someone else in the agency," and "There was a slight incident with communication because they were not organized and had a lot going on but, after that, it was smooth sailing and professional."

Perceptions of and Interactions with Youth Staff

Next, participants were asked about their project interactions with youth and how it may have changed the way they or others in their organization thought about urban youth. Although there were a few instances in which interviewees had little or no contact with youth, most of the feedback on their interactions with youth was extremely positive. Comments included "We got many compliments [on the youth] from conference participants. They were very impressed with their technology skills. They even gave CAP a standing ovation at the end. Even the technology staff at the Queen Mary got help from CAP," "Very knowledgeable, extremely enthusiastic," "The youth were very well trained, professional, mature and a pleasure to work with," "The youth were knowledgeable and passionate with the work they do and it shows," "The quality of work for their age was phenomenal," and "CAP youth were amazing and extremely mature. They were very helpful, very patient, and strong role models. I loved having them."

Most of the participants said that their experience with CAP did not change their opinions of urban youth since they also worked with urban youth, however, some suggested that their experience confirmed or enhanced their perceptions of urban youth. Comments included "I always had high expectations and good experiences with urban youth and the CAP youth exceeded my expectations," "For me, it didn't change but it

reinforced the amount of talent they have and it was great to see them use their skills. It makes me realize the importance of programs like these,” and “It only enhanced it. I already thought highly of urban youth and it was nice to continue that feeling.” The experience did appear to positively influence a couple of participants’ views or those of others; “I don’t know if we ever realized they were urban youth, but meeting them, I was surprised. I thought they were all great,” “We need to include them not only as recipients of programming but also as resources,” and “The response to our magazine has been overwhelming and it has visually and verbally portrayed a new image of youth in the neighborhood to people unaware of youth’s potential.”

Client Perceptions of Social Enterprises

Participants were also asked to define social enterprise and to identify the benefits of social enterprises. Although this seemed to be one of the more difficult questions for most people to answer, they did articulate many aspects of social enterprise as well as numerous benefits. Many noted the positive benefits of social enterprise for the individuals (often youth) learning and working in these endeavors. These comments included; “A non-profit organization designed to help provide positive experiences for youth and give them leadership opportunities,” “It employs youth in meaningful experiences and career choices, what they gained from our project will carry on with them for a long time,” and “When you give a particular group the opportunity to better themselves through working with a business.”

Some noted that social enterprise fulfills a dual role, providing learning experiences for youth, while, at the same time, generating money to fund social programs. For example, participants said, “We see it as a double line return on

investment. It meets social objectives and we get unrestricted income and revenue for activities that are not tied to a grant,” and “Taking the social endeavors, community and youth development, and utilizing them to get the awareness out, and also to generate income.” A number of participants suggested that social enterprise was a blend of the profit and non-profit worlds coming together to bring about positive social change.

These comments included “Taking the processes and work normally associated with for-profit endeavors and adding the elements of social responsibility. It’s a way to uplift or help people who wouldn’t have that help as well as make a profit. It’s a way for business to contribute to the community in a bigger way than just money,” and “I would define it as entrepreneurship with a social twist—more geared toward the non-profit realm. The benefits are the grassroots.”

Others suggested that the benefits of social enterprise expand beyond the individuals involved since they may then go on to teach others and contribute to the success of their communities. Comments along these lines included, “Community-based organizations use community members who have been taught skills, at least in part, by members of their community and let them take these skills back to the community,” “A non-profit gives back to the community and helps the community succeed with a goal,” and “I would say building our future community whether young, old or in between; building on relationships, skills and allowing people to do stuff they normally would not have the chance to do.”

Suggestions to Improve CAP

Finally, participants were asked to share suggestions on ways to improve CAP. Six (35%) people said that they could not think of anything that they would change. The most frequent type of suggestion for change (N = 6, 35%) focused on improving the management or business aspects of CAP. These comments included; “Develop a standardized intake of clients where all the client information is clearly spelled out because they did it really informally by e-mail, so it may be difficult to track,” “Keep up on trends and what is happening in their marketplace,” “Have them take a business class and get a better grasp on business practices,” and “Have more of a client interview process and a little more communication so their image and our image can merge.” Three (18%) also suggested that CAP should advertise more, including, have DVD samples of digital media programs at various grade levels. One client each said CAP should tell clients about restricted youth schedules up-front, and that they should have the technology to burn the discs on site, or to up-load it to a website, so people can walk away with the product. Finally, two participants, again, reiterated their excellent experiences and said they hope to work with CAP again in the future.

Conclusions

This study explored client perceptions of CAP during its first year of operation by interviewing 17 representatives from organizations that had completed contracts with CAP during that time period. In terms of interpreting the findings, it is important to note that CAP was a brand new organization. Given the newness of the organization and its commitment to hiring primarily youth from the community served by the Downtown YMCA Community Development Branch, it was reasonable to assume that there would

be some initial implementation challenges and adjustments that would need to be made. Given this context, it is particularly impressive and exciting to see the positive comments and feedback provided by the clients during CAP's first year of operation.

All of these organizations interviewed here were community-based, non-profits or non-profit professional organizations. According to the CAP business plan, this was to be expected. Clients were most likely to have heard about CAP through colleagues who were familiar with the YMCA or Youth Institute program, or because they or their organizations had prior relationships with the YMCA. It is not unusual for social enterprises to count on their networks and/or networking for support (Shaw, 2004). This suggests that word-of-mouth advertising was the most effective mechanism for attracting clients the first year. There is also some evidence to suggest that positive client experience and outcomes with CAP may increase their future client pool. For example, recommendations from professionals on one job directly led to two others during the same calendar year, reinforcing the power of such advertising.

One of the primary mechanisms for recruiting CAP clients was advertising at conferences and workshops. To some extent, this strategy paid dividends as 29% of clients learned about the organization in this way. Thus, it should be beneficial to continue this practice of recruitment in the future. Given the other potential consumers noted in the CAP business plan and based on the feedback from some of these clients, recent efforts of CAP to expand their advertising efforts to reach other markets seems sound and appropriate. It is worth noting that CAP served clients throughout the state and, to some extent, across the nation. This is likely, in part, due to prior relationships the organization had as well as to the fact that the YMCA is a national organization. In

any event, the ability to provide services outside a narrow geographic area is likely to contribute to CAP's long-term ability to become self-sustaining.

The social enterprise literature underscores the importance of providing innovative services (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006), responding to a demand (Young, 2007) and addressing gaps in service needs (Shaw, 2004). It appears that the varied multi-media products and services that CAP provides, as projected in their business plan, do address current needs of many non-profit organizations. This can be seen both in the variety of their services that were used as well as in the many comments which specifically recognized the specialized expertise that CAP was able to provide. For example, given the current educational and business emphasis on youth technology skills, it is likely that the demand for CAP training and consultation services on developing out-of-school programs addressing this issue will grow. However, few other organizations will be able to provide this service in a way that encompasses youth development practices like CAP, which was seemingly quite important to these clients. CAP should continue to monitor these trends and be willing to expand their service and product lines when appropriate.

The amount of money CAP generated during the first year almost tripled the amount projected in their business plan, again reinforcing the notion that there is a viable market for their services. Given that some estimate that a social enterprise needs to make almost \$1 million each year to achieve its mission and financial sustainability (Shorr, 2006), reaching this level of business early in the life of the project is extremely important. It might be useful for CAP to work with its' Advisory Board to establish new

financial goals and quarterly benchmarks that will help to articulate the path to sustainability and organizational growth.

Reasons for Hiring CAP

The factor that most strongly influenced these organizations to hire CAP was its social mission to support youth and youth programs. In response to both open and closed-ended questions, clients underscored their strong support for entrepreneurial programs that provide meaningful youth and career development opportunities to urban youth. According to Young (2007), some organizations will be more willing to purchase goods and services from socially-oriented businesses. Thus, this is a strong selling point for CAP to highlight in both marketing materials and pitches to potential clients. These clients also suggested that the expertise and experience that CAP brought to their projects were also important to their selection process. This is likely, as suggested in the CAP business plan, due to the fact that non-profits like these often do not have access to the specialized technology and media skills necessary for their work in today's society. Thus, CAP may be filling an important business niche.

It is interesting, given how most participants described they became involved with CAP, that prior work with the YMCA and positive referrals from past clients were rated fairly low in terms of their influence on the decision to hire CAP. It is also somewhat surprising that price/cost was not seen as a major factor in the selection process as the ability to offer low-cost services has been identified as a possible benefit of social enterprises (Young, 2007). Now that CAP has generated numerous product samples and a client base, being able to showcase these things may be useful in future marketing efforts. Staff might want to create a product portfolio to share with potential clients or

use satisfied client comments in new marketing materials. Price and cost of services may also become more salient given the current economic climate.

Client Experiences with CAP

Overall, these clients perceived CAP staff, their working relationships with CAP, and the products generated by CAP very positively. CAP staff was often described as extremely committed, professional as well as technically and interpersonally skilled. Clients were typically very pleased, if not totally positive, about their experience with CAP staff. In particular, they often emphasized that CAP staff was willing to go above and beyond expectations. Taken as a whole, this information suggests that the staff have many of the diverse and necessary skills needed to fulfill the mission and contractual obligations of CAP. These clients were also very pleased with the high quality of the work CAP produced, an essential component of maintaining a successful business or social enterprise. This commitment to quality is to be encouraged since it will likely result in return business and/or positive word-of-mouth that will attract future business.

When there was feedback for staff for project improvement, it seemed to fall mainly in areas related to the organization and communication. This may not be that surprising given that the CAP-dedicated project staff was primarily hired for their technical and youth development expertise rather than their business experience. The literature on social enterprises notes that business skills may need to be developed among non-profit staff when starting these endeavors (Sharir & Lerner, 2006). It will likely be useful for CAP to work on designing and/or fully implementing more standardized intake and tracking systems for projects. Standardizing these processes should help to increase the likelihood of a clear, shared vision of the project as well as to potentially improve

communication and to contribute to effective time management, responsiveness and assignment of organizational resources. Having these systems in place should also prove beneficial as business expands and the juggling of projects and staff becomes more complicated. It will also ensure that all project staff will have ongoing access to current information related to all contracts. Thus, when project questions arise and the primary staff are unavailable, someone will still be able to respond to client requests. Formalizing and structuring the communication process with clients will also be critical if CAP continues to attract clients from diverse geographic regions.

Client Perceptions of CAP Youth

As noted earlier, CAP commitment to youth was one of the most important reasons why clients chose to employ CAP. Their successful involvement of youth in diverse work products and environments also appeared to be an important contributor to how these clients viewed the success of CAP as well. All participants rated CAP as “excellent” in the inclusion of youth and most told stories that exemplified the important contributions that youth made to their projects. In some instances, participants noted how these work experiences would help these youth in their futures or that they were role models for other youth. This evidence provides some support for the idea that CAP is meeting the “social” side of their mission as well as the business side. This finding is encouraging given that social enterprises need to document their social impact as well as their economic outcomes (Gray, Healy & Crotis, 2003).

The many comments regarding the professionalism and the skills of the youth suggests that CAP, in partnership with the Youth Institute, really have helped youth to develop important and diverse career and technical skills. Thus, it is important that the

job skills training from the Youth Institute, as well as the on-the-job training and mentoring through CAP continue. Ensuring that youth are included in projects and have, when appropriate, direct client contact may not only help youth to develop their skills but also help CAP to gain further client loyalty. Another component of the evaluation is examining the impact of program involvement on the youth, so it will be interesting to see if the youth themselves view their participation similarly to the clients.

Almost all of the clients interviewed here were involved in some way with urban youth so their experiences with the project did not actually change their perceptions of these youth, although many said their interactions with CAP youth confirmed or enhanced their perceptions about what youth are able to do. One participant thought that the product CAP generated for his/her contract would help others to see urban youth in more positive ways, which is an interesting potential benefit of this social enterprise as well.

Perceptions of Social Enterprise

Similar to many and varied definitions of social enterprise in the literature (Mair & Marti, 2006; Shaw, 2004), participants in this study had somewhat differing views of social enterprise. Common components of the definitions focused on helping individuals to gain needed skills while making a profit to help the organization support its programs. Indeed, most recognized the balance of social enterprise between mission and money (Weerawardena & Mort, 2006). Like Young (2007), some participants noted the need to bring business practices into the non-profit realm in order to accomplish the goals of social enterprises. A number also suggested that the benefits of social enterprise go beyond the individuals and organizations directly involved to also strengthen and

improve communities. This latter finding has also been indicated in the literature (Gray, Healy & Crotis, 2003). Given that social enterprise is relatively new in the United States, it is positive that the participants in this study had some idea about the term and seemed quite interested in the concept, in fact, at least one organization was even starting its own social enterprises.

Suggestions to Improve CAP

About 65% of the participants made some type of suggestion regarding how CAP might improve as an organization. The most frequent suggestions were focused on strengthening the organizational aspects of CAP. As noted earlier, centralizing and developing strong tracking, accounting and communication systems will become even more important for CAP as business and staff increases. Thus, developing organizational tools, training staff and ensuring that everyone up-dates the tools on an ongoing basis should be a priority of the organization at this time. In addition, in order to expand its business and, ultimately be in a position to sustain itself, CAP will need to keep current regarding business trends and expand its advertising to new customers. They might also consider how they can use their current products and social networks to reach new clients. For example, CAP might enlist satisfied clients to serve as references for potential clients or use testimonials on promotional materials. They might also provide clients with marketing materials and ask them to share with others or periodically touch base with past clients (cards, business up-dates, etc.) to keep CAP fresh in their minds. Sustainable social enterprises are able to identify multiple ways to effectively market their services (Thompson & Doherty, 2006).

In conclusion, during its first year CAP began a social enterprise, hired staff, trained interns and successfully completed 19 diverse contracts. Clients were very positive about both their interactions with CAP staff and youth and the projects that resulted from their collaboration. It appears that CAP has made a strong start and should continue to focus on strengthening its organizational infrastructure while continuing to provide high quality services.

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