



Co-Leadership – Possible way to divide responsibilities

While traditional leadership models are still largely the norm, there are sometimes circumstances where organizations consider co-leadership. It may be due to a merger or because two candidates for the top leadership role bring different but needed strengths to the organization.

Each organization is different and would need to customize a plan and define the responsibilities in a way that works well for the organization and takes advantage of the specific skills and experience of the individuals involved.

Below is one example a possible way to divide roles.

External Focused Director

- Development and fundraising including events, direct mail, online fundraising, grants, planned giving/bequests, sponsorships, donor cultivation and retention, etc.
- Outreach to all communities served including marketing, media relations, communications (including online) to support both animal programs at the shelter (such as promotion/events to support pet adoption and spay/neuter) as well as development/fundraising
- Programs related primarily to people and the community, may include the recruitment aspects of the volunteer and foster care programs

Internal Focused Director

- Lifesaving, animal care and the facilitation of lifesaving
- Programs related to the shelter or animals at (or arriving at) the shelter to include surrender intervention, pet retention, adoptions, and volunteers and foster care programs as they relate to animals and facilities
- Clinic services, veterinary care and spay/neuter services for shelter animals, public animals and community cats
- Field services
- Networking and relationships with other shelters/organizations
- Facilities, maintenance, fleet/vehicles and related functions

Responsibilities Assigned to One or Both Based on Skills

- Administrative and other support functions including offices management,
- HR (ensuring that job descriptions, performance evaluation processes, etc. are in place) internal communications
- Accounting/Finance (sound practices and controls in place, annual audits, etc.) in order to serve the entire organization
- IT services that support the entire organization

Responsibilities for Both Co-CEOs or Co-Executive Directors

- Commitment to the organization and to saving animals
- Report to board of directors
- Communication and strong collaboration between co-leaders
- Strategic Planning
- Networking within the community
- Customer service
- Staff management & development
- Creating and managing budgets
- Compliance with governmental and organizational policies and industry (animal welfare and non-profit) best practices
- Service Contracts (such as Carson City, Washoe County)
- Maintaining official records and documents

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