



NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS

FINAL REPORT

RUTHERFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan – 2009-2011



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TABLE OF CONTENTS
RUTHERFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

| | |
|---|-----------|
| BACKGROUND | 2 |
| THE ASSIGNMENT | 2 |
| MISSION | 4 |
| TRENDS IN THE OUTSIDE ENVIRONMENT | 4 |
| COMPETITION | 6 |
| STRENGTHS OF THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION..... | 6 |
| LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION..... | 7 |
| VISION OF THE ORGANIZATION IN THREE YEARS' TIME..... | 9 |
| ACTION PLAN..... | 13 |
| APPENDICES..... | 16 |
| Appendix 1 – Potential Partnerships | 17 |
| Appendix 2 – Facility Improvements | 18 |
| Appendix 3 – Example of Detailed Action Plan..... | 20 |
| Appendix 4 – NESC Description..... | 21 |
| Appendix 5 – Consultants' Biographical Data | 22 |

BACKGROUND

The Highlands Regional Library Cooperative (HRLC) was established in 1994 and serves nearly one thousand members who represent academic, public, school and allied support libraries in a seven-county area in northern New Jersey. The Cooperative promotes full and equal access to resources for the residents of Bergen, Hunterdon, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex and Warren Counties by envisioning, developing and supporting cooperative activities, programs and services for and among member libraries.

To help fulfill this mission by partnering with member libraries, Highlands believes an organizational development process based on strategic planning will help educate local library trustees in their responsibilities. Its thinking is based on positive results from a Strategic Plan Retreat conducted with the Glen Rock Public Library in 2008.

HRLC began this process by selecting three public libraries in its area of responsibility to work with the National Executive Service Corps (NESC) and who share a portion of the cost. The libraries selected were: Roxbury, Rutherford and Bloomingdale.

The Rutherford Public Library circulates approximately 257,000 items per year. The collection contains 103,000 volumes and the Library serves a population of 18,110 residents. The annual budget is approximately \$1.35 million.

THE ASSIGNMENT

With the above background in mind, NESC worked with the Rutherford Public Library to help it prepare a strategic plan that would enhance its effectiveness and improve funding capability. This included:

- ◆ Reviewing the Mission Statement
- ◆ Assessing the outside environment
- ◆ Assessing strengths and limitations of Rutherford Public Library
- ◆ Developing a vision for the Library for 2012
- ◆ Guiding the organization in preparing action steps to achieve the vision

To accomplish the above, the NESC consultants had an initial meeting with Library staff members, Board members, Friends of the Library and members of the community to become familiar with the above issues. This was followed by a full-day retreat attended by the same participants. The NESC consultants worked with the Library staff and Board to draft the final strategic plan. Six months after the plan is completed, the NESC consultants will return to the Rutherford Public Library to review its progress.

Participants in the Strategic Plan were:

◆ **Members of the Board of Trustees**

- Thomas Bryant
- Brenda Fargo
- Nan Giblin
- Janice Glock
- Gerry Grenier
- John Hipp, Mayor
- Patricia Wester
- Ann Wilson
- Thomas Yezerski

◆ **Members of the Friends**

- Kathy Monahan
- Irene Solleder

◆ **Library Staff**

- Ellen Carter
- Jane Fisher
- Jane Tarantino
- Joan Velez

◆ **Members of the Community**

- Carole Koto
- Anne McCormack
- Laura Seehaus

MISSION

The Mission of the Rutherford Public Library is to provide our community a welcoming environment and resources that encourage lifelong learning.

TRENDS IN THE OUTSIDE ENVIRONMENT

There are several trends in the outside environment that the Library needs to consider as it plans for the future. These trends warrant careful and continuous evaluation.

Economic Activity

Economic activity plays multiple roles. First, the biggest funding source for the Library is the municipal budget, which is under significant pressure. Second, the downturn in economic activity adds financial pressure on families, resulting in the increase in the Library's popularity and also making the fundraising activities more challenging. Third, other possible funding sources such as corporate sponsorships are also declining. On a positive note, the economic downturn heightens opportunities to publicize Library services to the Rutherford community.

Increased Demand for Services

Services that the Library provides are increasingly sought due to:

- ◆ More children using the Library because both parents are working
- ◆ Unemployment, leading to more people using the Library for job searches and to save money
- ◆ A growing number of people telecommuting from the Library
- ◆ Increasing requests for non-print material such as computer online access and DVDs.

Technology Changes

Increasingly, technology changes will impact how information is gathered and dispersed. Internet usage continues to grow and new hand-held technologies (e.g., *Kindle*) that will potentially transform the local library's role in its community may become important. Libraries will continue to provide printed materials and computer-based facilities for new media, plus they will need to accommodate new developments -- for example, users accessing research materials from home. This puts pressure on resources and raises questions about how to allocate funds. One additional element of complexity is the "age gap." The skill sets of younger and older patrons may lead to differing expectations and preferences. Technology changes also raise the issue of how the Library staff will stay current.

Demographic Changes

The Rutherford community has experienced an increase in diversity. As a result, there is a greater need for ESL classes and the need to provide an increase in reading materials in languages other than English, as well as culturally diverse programs.

| | 1990 | 2000 | Change Over/(Under) |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Median Age | 36.6 | 38.8 | 2.2 years |
| % under 18 | 19.0 | 20.8 | 1.8 pts |
| % over 65 | 15.8 | 14.6 | (1.2) |
| | | | |
| % White | 89.4 | 82.0 | (7.4) |
| % Asian | 7.2 | 11.3 | 3.1 |
| % Hispanic | 5.8 | 8.6 | 2.8 |
| | | | |
| % Grad HS or higher | 83.1 | 88.3 | 5.2 |
| % Bachelor's degree or higher | 32.4 | 40.3 | 7.9 |
| % Dropouts | 16.9 | 11.7 | (5.2) |

Source: New Jersey State Data Center

Going Green

In order to reduce the “*carbon footprint*,” many libraries have taken steps toward energy conservation by more recycling and reusing, and also adapting their building. Rutherford will be in a position to consider emerging environmentally progressive technologies while staying aware of current issues (e.g., LEED, sustainability).

Increased Patron Expectations

Patrons have high expectations including accessibility to the building, extended hours and the ability to request that books from other libraries be sent to their home library in Rutherford. Collaboration with other libraries and the BCCLS consortium will continue to play a key role in helping meet these expectations.

COMPETITION

As the world becomes increasingly digitized, the competition between the printed word and electronic delivery will intensify and, consequently, challenge our collections decisions.

- ◆ Internet -- allows patrons to download information, books, movies and music on their home or work computers.
- ◆ *Kindle* and other hand-held digital books could eventually make the printed word obsolete.

Rental services such as Blockbuster, *Netflix* and *Bookswim* allow readers to order books and movies online for a fee.

Commercial book sellers such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Half.com offer books for sale and book recommendations, and the retail locations also have coffee lounges, story programs and author book signings.

Other sources. Patrons also have access to several other institutions which provide services similar to the Rutherford Library. These include: other local libraries (e.g., Secaucus Public Library Business Resource Center), educational institutions and private collections.

Other Borough departments. The competition for funding makes the other Borough departments a competitor.

STRENGTHS OF THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION

Reputation. The Rutherford Public Library is a trusted place with an excellent reputation. The Children's Library is welcoming to parents and children and there is a broad fan base among the sub-communities. In fact, because of the reputation, many visitors come from nearby towns.

Staff excellence. The service-oriented staff is experienced. They are willing to go the extra mile, and are flexible and open to trying new things.

Director. The Director is experienced and has the respect of the Board as well as the staff.

Board of Trustees. The Library has a dedicated and hard-working Board of Trustees who is willing to listen. There is support from the Borough which has led to strong funding to date.

Friends of the Library. The Friends group does fundraising and community outreach which allows the Library to host more programs than its budget could otherwise sustain.

Programming. The Library is especially known for Young Adult and Children's programs such as:

- Reading Clubs
- Friday Fun Nights
- Poetry Workshops
- Book Discussions

Collection. The Library is an active member of BCCLS which shares books and other materials and provides common access to electronic resources. The book collection is strong, particularly in new books and classics. There is also a growing collection of movies and music.

Relationships. The Library has excellent relationships with other Borough Departments including Borough Hall Offices, the Police Department and the DPW. The Library also has excellent relationships with other public libraries and with the Rutherford Public School and St. Mary's School.

Facility. The Library is located in a convenient area. The soundproof glass room and large auditorium are in demand by many groups. The Children's Room is welcoming and safe.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT ORGANIZATION

Communication/marketing. It is not clear how the community perceives the Library and if residents are fully aware of the services provided. Marketing strategies to raise public appreciation are underdeveloped.

Insufficient resources. Funding constraints have recently led to a decrease in hours of operation and less money for Library materials and programs desired by the community. The Library relies on funding from the Friends to support some programs. With the poor economy and consequent potential shortfall in fundraising, this reliance could become a limitation. The Friends group acknowledges that it lacks visibility and needs more resources and techniques to conduct fundraising. The Friends of the Library also struggle to find volunteers. Communication between the Friends and the Board regarding fundraising goals and priorities is irregular.

Technology. The technology the Library provides needs to be more reliable (e.g., capacity of the wireless network). More thought needs to be given to the layout of the computers and the Library's future technological infrastructural needs. No plan or funding exists to keep the staff skills up to date.

Facility. The Rutherford Library building does not reflect its position as the “jewel of the community.” It has been well maintained but the building is outdated with respect to modern demands. Specifically, there is a shortage of community meeting space and the computer layout is not optimized. There are also some interior decorating shortcomings (e.g., carpeting, lighting and furniture are 35 years old). From an external standpoint, there is little signage and several trees that obscure the front entrance. Significant fundraising will be required to implement the new design.

VISION OF THE ORGANIZATION IN THREE YEARS' TIME

CLIENTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Objective: Continue our program excellence in the areas of Children and Adults, and at the same time expand our outreach to underserved populations: ethnic populations and other newcomers, teens, “tweens” and non-users.

Strategies:

1. Systematically review and evaluate the Library’s current programs and services
2. Recommend program and service enhancements to ensure the Library is meeting its patrons’ needs
3. Develop programs and services targeted to ethnic populations, teens, and “tweens”
4. Develop a program designed to attract residents who are not currently using the Library
5. Explore and develop three new partnership opportunities over the next three years (e.g., a new community alliance, key BCCLS libraries and the local college)

COMMUNICATION

Objective: Deliver a consistent, high-impact message which enables patrons, residents, community leaders and the Mayor and Council to fully understand and appreciate the value of the Library.

Strategies:

1. Develop an analysis of the value the Library brings to the community
2. Design and implement a regularly scheduled communication plan
3. Develop a more consistent look across our materials (e.g., flyers, Website and newsletter)

TECHNOLOGY

Objective: Keep abreast of technology developments and play a vital role in educating the community.

Strategies:

1. Ensure we have the infrastructure to meet the needs of our patrons, such as Wi-Fi bandwidth, redundant Internet connections, etc.
2. Understand community needs and incorporate into design plan
3. Understand staff training needs and propose a training plan
4. Utilize a collaborative approach (Library Board, Library staff and high school teachers, business and community resources)

FACILITIES

Objective: Initiate a renovation of the Library to enhance its services and spaces and to be responsive to current and future trends in library use.

Strategies:

1. Prioritize and develop a sequencing recommendation for the architect/design consultant plan
2. Gain support from Mayor, town council and the community
3. Develop a fundraising plan

STAFF/BUDGET

Objective: Continue to offer excellent service to the public and also to provide the technology support desired. Ensure adequate funding.

Strategies:

1. Ensure that staffing levels keep pace with increased usage
2. Ensure that staff is trained in technology
3. Consider starting a Library Foundation to help raise funds, especially for capital needs.

| Year | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 |
|----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total circulation | 264,270 | 270,876 | 277,648 | 284,589 |
| # of registered borrowers | 10,900 | 11,173 | 11,452 | 11,738 |
| Program attendance | 10,394 | 10,446 | 10,707 | 10,974 |
| Door count | 222,620 | 223,733 | 229,327 | 235,060 |
| | | | | |
| Staffing | | | | |
| Full-time librarians | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Part-time librarians (fte) | 1.11 | 1.11 | 1.3 | 1.32 |
| Full-time support | 7 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Part-time support (fte) | 7.29 | 7.42 | 7.49 | 8 |
| | | | | |
| Volunteers | 30 | 30 | 32 | 35 |
| | | | | |
| Budget* | 1,051,731 | 1,085,912 | 1,123,919 | 1,168,876 |

** Excludes utilities, fringe benefits, insurance and payroll processing costs*

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Objective: Seek new trustees with the following skill sets for recommendation to the Mayor as needed.

- ◆ Legal
- ◆ Financial
- ◆ Technology
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Government Affairs/Politically or Socially Connected
- ◆ Fundraising

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Objective: *Seek a productive working relationship with the Friends of the Library in which Trustees' and Friends' goals are aligned.*

Strategies:

1. Clarify fundraising priorities between the Library Trustees and the Friends of the Library
2. Enhance communication to strengthen working relationship as needed

ACTION PLAN

CLIENTS, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Champions: Joan Velez and Jane Tarantino

Resource Team: Kathy, Tom B, Carole, Susan R, Friends, Jane F, Jane T, Joan, Nan, Janice

| Item | Who | When |
|--|----------------------|-------------|
| Examine current programs and recommend program revisions | Joan, Jane T | Dec 2009 |
| Identify offerings through other organizations including churches, Recreation Department, Kip (senior) Center, public and parochial schools, local college, Adult School | Janice, Joan, Jane F | Q1 2010 |
| Establish a Partnership Task Force | Jane F, Joan | Q1 2010 |
| Assess population changes in the community especially as related to teens, "tweens" and ethnicity. Develop programming recommendation | Jane F, Susan | June 2010 |
| Establish a community-needs assessment committee. Develop a plan to survey Rutherford residents' needs (users and non-users) | Jane F, Nan | June 2010 |

See Appendix 1 for potential partners

COMMUNICATION

Champion: Tom Bryant

Resource Team: Tom Y, Anne, Brenda, Janice

| Item | Who | When |
|--|--|-------------|
| Meet with committee | Tom B, Tom Y, Anne, Janice, Brenda, Jane F | Q3 2009 |
| Define value of Library for patrons (utilize NJLA and local resources) | Tom B, Jane F, Brenda, Janice | Q4 2009 |
| Develop communication plan (e.g., annual report, press releases, National Library Week) | Tom B, Jane F, Brenda, Janice | Q4 2009 |
| Develop consistent reporting mechanism(s) to help the Mayor and Council better understand the value of the Library | Tom B, Ann, Nan, Gerry, Janice, Jane F | Q4 2009 |
| Review communication materials (flyers, Website, newsletter) and recommend changes | Tom B, Tom Y, Anne, Janice, Brenda, Jane F | Q2 2010 |

TECHNOLOGY

Champion: Gerry Grenier

Resource Team: Ann, Susan Rappaport, Janice, Ellen

| Item | Who | When |
|---|-------------------------|-------------|
| Establish Tech Task Force (ad hoc) | Ann and Gerry | May 2009 |
| Short-term technology improvements: 1. More reliable printers 2. Consolidate Internet connections 3. Support for Wi-Fi. 4. Bandwidth seems inadequate 5. Reliability issues causing staff to troubleshoot 6. Investigate packet-shaper technology to put bandwidth rate limits on high-bandwidth usage (i.e., gaming) | Gerry, Jane F, Susan | Q4 2009 |
| Consult with architect over his ideas on tech infrastructure as part of the re-design study. | Gerry, Jane F, Nan | Q4 2009 |
| Identify community resources and potential partners (e.g., high school tech experts, tech experts who live in town, rep from Stevens Institute, key staff members, colleges) to assist in the short and long term | Gerry, Ann | Q2 2010 |
| Identify staff training needs with respect to technology | Gerry, Jane F, Susan | Q4 2010 |
| Identify customer needs | Gerry, Ann, Janice, Nan | Q2 2011 |

FACILITIES

Champion: Nan Giblin

Resource Team: Ann, Gerry, Janice, Pat

| What | Who | When |
|--|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Identify primary beneficiaries of each component | Jane | May 2009 |
| Review proposal with Mayor. Assess Borough funding opportunities | Jane, Ann, Mayor | May 2009 |
| Confirm direction with Board, including preliminary phase order/priorities | Ann, Nan, Gerry, Janice | Q4 2009 |
| Develop a community communications plan | Nan, Tom B, Pat | Q2 2010 |
| Investigate State and Federal sources of capital funding | Jane F | Ongoing |
| Assess feasibility for private fundraising | Ann, Nan, Pat Gerry, Janice | 2010 |

See details of facility improvements in Appendix 2

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Champions: Kathy Monahan and Irene Solleder

Resource Team: Kathy, Irene, Carole, Jane T, Jane F, Ann, Nan

| Item | Who | When |
|--|---|-------------|
| Determine where goals may not be in alignment, and opportunities for improved communication. Seek a productive working relationship. | Irene, Kathy, Carole, Jane T, Nan, Ann, Pat | Q1 2010 |

APPENDICES

POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

- § Neighboring libraries with program partnership opportunities (e.g., Secaucus, Nutley)

- § Business Community
 - Rutherford Downtown Partnership
 - Merchants
 - Small-business owners
 - Restaurateurs
 - Chamber of Commerce

- § Local College
 - Felician College (including College Library)

- § Public and Parochial Schools

- § Community Organizations
 - Rutherford Historic Preservation Commission
 - Meadowlands Museum
 - Woman's Club and Junior Woman's Club
 - Lions Club
 - Community Chest
 - Municipal Alliance

- § New Jersey Offices
 - Meadowlands Commission
 - Meadowlands Environmental Center
 - McDowell Observatory
 - One-Stop Career Center

- § Volunteers with skills in:
 - Graphic design
 - Web Page design
 - Grant writing
 - Fundraising
 - Marketing
 - Landscape design
 - Database management
 - Computer programming

- § Other
 - Hospitals
 - Senior care facilities
 - Kip Center

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

| Key Improvement | Benefits to Library Patrons |
|---|---|
| The Library becomes ADA-compliant | The Library is accessible to all residents |
| Lighting is updated throughout | Better lighting makes reading easier and reduces glare, while also making the building more energy-efficient <i>Books in the stacks can be found</i> <i>Call numbers are seen and readable</i> |
| Library has a more logical sequence with respect to relationship of spaces | Library patrons easily find what they need, and feel comfortable making the Library their own and spending more time in the building |
| Library is renovated with new furniture and carpeting | An updated look and feel of the Library makes it more welcoming and inviting |
| Children’s Department gains a separate program room, children’s restroom, entrance from the hallway near the elevator and a more open, ADA-compliant floor plan | Children have access to a more inviting facility and benefit from additional program space and safe restroom facilities |
| Main Desk is moved to be more visible to patrons entering the building; space for behind-the-scenes work is provided; and there are strong sightlines to all Library zones | The flow of the Library is more logical and patrons have a visible anchor point when they enter; staff/patron interactions become more efficient and functional |
| An accessible unisex restroom is provided on the main floor | Patrons need not go to the lower level to use restroom facilities |
| Additional meeting rooms and small-group workspace is provided | Patrons and organizations have access to appropriate space to conduct meetings and study groups |
| Audio/visual materials, periodicals and new books are visible and accessible | Patrons find it quick and easy to get to the most popular items; “noisier” self-serve functions are contained near the entryway of the Library <i>Media items still are in view of Main Desk for security monitoring</i> |
| A new reading/gallery area is provided on the mezzanine | Access is provided to a laptop-friendly, comfortable reading lounge |
| The Young Adult area is rearranged to better meet the needs of the patrons and offer a buffer between the YA area and the rest of the Library | Teens have a room that feels like their own, where they can interact with one another and use Library materials in an environment more suited to their learning style |

FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS (cont'd.)

| Key Improvement | Benefits to Library Patrons |
|--|--|
| The Park Avenue facade of the building has a more contemporary look and signage | The Library is more visible and better aligns with pedestrian-friendly Park Avenue |
| Staff workspaces and break room are situated appropriately and furnished comfortably without also serving as storage room | Library staff are more effective and efficient in their work with the public |

EXAMPLE OF DETAILED ACTION PLAN

Clients, Programs and Services Action Plan

Objective: Continue our program excellence in the areas of Children and Adults, and at the same time expand our outreach to underserved populations.

Champions: Joan Velez and Jane Tarantino

Resource Team: Kathy, Tom B, Carole, Susan R, Friends, Jane F, Jane T, Joan, Nan, Janice

| Item | Who | When |
|--|----------------------------|-------------|
| Establish a program evaluation committee | Joan Velez, Jane Tarantino | May 2009 |
| Evaluate possible survey instruments and feedback tools that the Library can use on an annual basis over the next five years | Joan, Jane | Aug 2009 |
| Select survey instruments | Joan, Jane | Sep 2009 |
| Secure funding, if needed, for any appropriate software and computer hardware | Joan, Jane | Oct 2009 |
| Develop a plan to evaluate Rutherford Library current programs, using the selected survey instruments/feedback tools | Joan, Jane | Nov 2009 |
| Draft survey | Joan, Jane | Dec 2009 |
| Conduct program evaluations | Joan, Jane | Q1 2010 |
| Identify offerings through other organizations including churches, Recreation Department, Kip (senior) Center, public and parochial schools, local college, Adult School | Janice, Joan, Jane | Q1 2010 |
| Analyze results and develop recommendations | Joan, Jane | Q2 2010 |
| Present results and recommendations to the Board | Joan, Jane | June 2010 |
| Develop an implementation plan based on recommendations | Joan, Jane | Q3 2010 |
| Implement proposed recommendations | TBD | TBD |

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SERVICE CORPS

Who We Are

Founded in 1977, the National Executive Service Corps is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that provides management consulting and business advisory services to the nonprofit and public sectors. NESC's mission is to make a meaningful contribution to our communities by strengthening the management of America's nonprofit organizations, schools and government agencies through quality, affordable consulting services which are donated by senior-level business people and professionals. Serving the five boroughs of New York City; Nassau, Suffolk, and Rockland/Westchester Counties; Central and Southwestern Connecticut; and New Jersey, NESC belongs to a national network of more than 30 independent Executive Service Corps affiliates across the country.

What We Do

NESC performs consulting and technical services in assisting organizations in the fields of arts and culture, health and human services, public and private education, religion and government. In addition to enhancing an organization's management effectiveness, NESC helps improve self-reliance and accountability, with the goal of increased productivity and resource utilization. The objective of each engagement is sharply defined and tailored to the specific needs of the client. NESC provides a wide range of management consulting and assistance including:

- ◆ Strategic and Business Planning
- ◆ Organizational Analysis
- ◆ Human Resources
- ◆ Board Development
- ◆ Financial Management Planning and Services
- ◆ Branding
- ◆ Marketing Plans
- ◆ Public Relations and Communications
- ◆ Fundraising Strategies
- ◆ Earned Income Strategies
- ◆ Risk Assessment
- ◆ Facilities Planning and Management
- ◆ Information Technology
- ◆ Executive Coaching and Mentoring
- ◆ Retreat Facilitation
- ◆ Executive Search and Recruiting
- ◆ Leadership Training and Development

NESC is supported by philanthropic contributions and modest fees for service. All clients are asked to have a shared stake in the consulting process to assure their commitment to results.

Please visit our website at www.nesc.org

CONSULTANTS' BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Consultants

Monica Knopf: A financial professional, Monica has had a diverse career with American Airlines where her most recent assignments were as manager of pricing strategy and, subsequently, marketing/revenue management. Since then she has been an organizational consultant to financial services firms, educational institutions and firms within the pharmaceutical and aerospace industries. Monica has a BA from Oberlin College, an MBA from Cornell University and recently completed a doctorate in Organizational Psychology from Rutgers. She has an independent consulting practice focused on Change Management and Talent Management.

Cynthia Stites: Virtually all of Cynthia Stites' business career was with Best Foods, where she held the title of Vice President, Marketing and Sales Services. An independent consultant as well as a member of the NESC team, her consulting practice has served St. Paul's CDC, AFS International and Dickinson College. Cynthia holds a BA in Language from Dickinson College, an MBA from the University of Virginia and an MS in Creativity and Change Management from Buffalo State University.

Director of Management Consulting

Robert F. Ehinger: Bob had a business career with Western Electric Co. and AT&T, and was a Public Relations Vice President at both companies. He also had extensive responsibilities in purchasing, human resources administration and general management.