

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – LEAGUE OF NH CRAFTSMEN’S 360 ASSESSMENT: BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Introduction

The League of NH Craftsmen (LNHC) conducted a 360 Degree Assessment in the late fall of 2016 to: serve as an evaluation of all aspects of the League’s management; determine the satisfaction of all categories of membership with the LNHC; and serve as a blueprint for future planning and development. The 360 Assessment was sent to all LNHC juried and supporting members, board members, and staff. Utilizing Constant Contact to report and calculate the responses, all responses were anonymous. The 360 Assessment promised everyone responding that the results would be posted on the LNHC website for their review. The LNHC would like to thank everyone who responded to the 360 Assessment for their honest and forthright suggestions and comments.

A composite of comments from the 360 Assessment for each category begins on page 4. In addition to the numerical ratings, we reviewed over 3,000 comments from more than 200 individuals. Many comments were duplicative, illustrating a common theme or concern. Whenever possible, we have not included highly negative comments about specific individuals by name. While these surveys are often difficult to read for the individuals involved who believe they are doing their best for the organization, it is imperative that the voices of those who completed the 360 are heard, understood, and responded to.

Summary of Findings

The assessment identified several key areas needing improvement: oversight and direction of all aspects of the LNHC, including the Board of Trustees, management, LNHC fine craft galleries, the Craft Center, LNHC finances, and transparency of the board and organization.

Board of Trustees

There are clear disconnects between the Board of Trustees, LNHC members, staff and volunteers. The Board of Trustees needs to do a better job of identifying themselves to the membership, and being more visible at LNHC functions. The Board of Trustees needs training on their role and responsibilities of governance. There needs to be greater and more frequent communication among the Board of Trustees, employees, LNHC members, and volunteers. The board and management need to develop new sources of financial support for the LNHC. Board members need to be more involved in fundraising and financial oversight to ensure adequate funding for the LNHC now and in the future. The Board of Trustees needs to work closely with the Executive Director to ensure financial stability of the LNHC. Above all, the Board of Trustees needs to be transparent in all of its dealings.

Management

The LNHC has undergone a substantial turnover in staff. The Board of Trustees and Executive Director should review all current positions to determine the level of staffing needed to sustain

and grow the LNHC, as well as the skills required by staff to carry out the necessary functions of each position. The salary levels of all positions within the LNHC should be reviewed to ensure that they are sufficient to attract and keep well qualified staff. Miriam Carter has been hired to serve as the new Interim Executive Director; she has management experience, as well as being a juried craftsperson for many years. The board needs to ensure that the new Executive Director has the support of the Board of Trustees, the tools she needs to lead the LNHC, and good communication with the board.

Staff

A great many respondents indicated that they do not know what each employee is responsible for. Management should have clear job descriptions for all staff, and provide information about the requirements of each position to members, through the website and/or newsletters.

All staff need to be well trained. Staff need to be more visible at LNHC events, and respond in a timely fashion to telephone and e-mail communications. Staff need to be more knowledgeable about, and sensitive to, the needs and constraints of craftspeople. There need to be adequate staff and/or volunteers to preside at the front desk when visitors or craftspeople come into the LNHC headquarters. The office and gallery must be open during all posted hours.

Fine Craft Galleries

The LNHC fine craft galleries provide both an opportunity for juried members to sell their work to the public, and to introduce the public to the LNHC and the benefits of purchasing fine craft.

The salaries of the sales staff in all galleries must be reviewed, and should be comparable to attract good staff. Staff should be provided with training to enable them to have a good idea of the various media produced by the craftspeople, as well as good sales techniques. The galleries must be clean, well organized, and displayed adequately to allow visitors to clearly see each piece of craft available for sale. The point of sale and inventory systems are not compatible across galleries, and should be reviewed and coordinated, if possible. Web generated sales need to be available through all the galleries.

Craft Center

The Craft Center at the LNHC has been underutilized. Adequate staffing, promotion and funding need to be priorities for the Craft Center to attract individuals and increase revenue.

Classes at all levels, taught by qualified craftspeople, should be offered to the general public, including students. Classes need to be marketed effectively, including by the LNHC'S galleries.

Additional classes need to be offered specifically for craftspeople to improve their business management skills.

Better use needs to be made of the facilities at headquarters.

Webinars for craftspeople and the public interested in making and appreciating fine craft should be developed and posted on the LNHC website.

Financial Stability

The LNHC must develop a strategic plan that will build financial stability and sustainability. This will not be achieved without the leadership and presence of a Development Director. The Board of Trustees, staff, consultants, juried and supporting members and volunteers must be involved in marketing information about the LNHC, increasing sources of revenue, ensuring strong financial management and transparency, and growing the LNHC.

Recommendations

Feedback received tells us that the individuals who responded to the 360 Assessment appreciated the opportunity to let their voices and concerns be heard by the individuals who oversee and manage the League. Board and staff should use this assessment as a blueprint to develop a plan, policies and procedures, timelines, and budgets. Nothing should continue to be done “because that’s the way we’ve always done it”. During this time of reduced resources, everyone needs to be working efficiently with the time, money, and resources available.

The Board of Trustees should develop a plan to address the issues/concerns raised by individuals who completed the 360 Assessment, and place that on the LNHC website. An update could be posted after six months to demonstrate the progress made by the board, staff, and committees in implementing the plan. This also demonstrates that the League listened to the comments and acted.

We recommend that a shorter electronic assessment be conducted each year.

This report was prepared by Jill Schiffman and Judith Raskin of the LNHC Development and Membership Committee.

Supporting members of the LNHC may request a copy of the full report by contacting mcarter@nhcrafts.org.