APPRECIATING UMAINE EXTENSION SUCCESSES AND BUILDING ON OUR SUCCESS

March 9, 2011 Organizational Meeting Small Group Notes

What individual and organizational factors contributed to success? (Rely on the peak experience interviews, the successful program presentations and your knowledge of Extension)

MISSION/METHODOLOGY
- Credible information - research based
- Outreach throughout state of Maine
- Trust
- Product or service that has inherent value
- Responsiveness to changing needs
- Scope of the work we do is both a challenge and a strength
    even though we are in different programs we share dedication to our clients, to helping people improve their lives
- Diversity of the questions and the responses have to be resource based.
- Outreach
- Capacity building...
- Well established program that can meet the needs of the state
- Core programs but meet different need, in counties/communities
- Human connection- face to face, distance learning, learning through videos
- Organizational core values for staff and those with whom we work
- Partnering with other organizations
- Teamwork
- Systems view: the obvious solution is often part of the problem. Through listening, we can often see through the band-aid approach to sustainable solutions.
- Teamwork
- Trust
- Connection to faculty doing research
- National/international reach of Extension
- Collaborating with other groups and programs

FLEXIBILITY
- We can be innovative, creative … make our wheels turn
- Freedom to choose projects we work on … just when you think you have run out of things to do, something new and exciting comes along
- Customize our programs and program creativity
- Flexibility to meet local needs
- An organization that is flexible enough to allow programs/individuals to develop/

evolve to meet need - or to "let go" of content areas that are no longer relevant
● Partnering between programs

EMPLOYEE ATTRIBUTES
● The longevity of staff in Extension
● Straight forwardness
● Knowledgeable employees
● Passion and compassion
● Broad based staff experience
● Passion for what they are doing
● Meaning
● Positive thinking
● Valuing individual professionalism
● Respect
● Good work ethic
● Innovation
● Support staff and all they do, often behind the scenes.
● Amazed at the amount of knowledge among staff.
● Respect for each other as staff - truly amazing.
● Willingness to go out on a limb
● Emotional attachment to what we are doing; passion leads to success in all of
     our programs
● Can do attitude
● Camaraderie
● Team mentality (people willing to give credit to colleagues, rather than claiming
     credit for themselves)
● Motive is to make a difference in people's lives
● Willingness to listen
● Relationship building
● Depth and breadth of knowledge … ability to access expertise
● There is someone in extension who knows someone who can do/find/know what
     you need, we know who to ask
● Establishing trust and building relationships with clients … very few others can do this.
● Our skills in facilitation and other process … support the content of our work
● Knowing the resources available to be able to provide to clients
● Communication
● Respect
● Personal interactions
● Fearless
● Willing
● Innovation
● Risk Taking
● Teamwork
● Willingness to collaborate with other colleagues

- Longevity and continuity of extension staff
- Our networking, collaborating, support of each other make it all possible and
  more valuable - both within extension and with outside organizations
- Teamwork
- Mentoring
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Longstanding relationships

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT/INFRASTRUCTURE
- How well supported we are in our roles
- Volunteers
- Opportunities for professional development
- Flexibility - family friendly
- Patience and time to hear the successes
- Commitment of Extension to professional development of staff
- Volunteer energy and time
- Relationship with the University
- Honesty and openness
- Volunteers.
- We are empowered and supported in doing things
- Face to face meetings of extension staff
- Willingness to support (culture of support for colleagues and programs compared to other
  work environments)
- Opportunity to learn as we work- life long learners
- Opportunities to do things that are beyond what you would have expected and to grow.
  Opportunities to stretch.
- Our volunteers amplify the impacts and reach of our work.
- Infrastructure... network... synergy
- Volunteer resources and availability and willingness
- Engaging volunteers...
- Web clips
- Websites
- New technology
- Inclusiveness
- Interconnectedness
- New technology
- Resources to find information specifically within extension
- Volunteer base-driven externally

IMPACTS
- Legacy of success
- We are making our mark, although we might not hear or see that result
  immediately

- Statewide impact
- The gratitude and appreciation from clients is a motivation for staff and feeds us.
- Relationship, trust, return clients; people who have benefited come back as volunteers.
- The sense that "we really do matter", e.g. senior companions, etc.
- Customers
- Sense of accomplishment or making a difference
- Feedback from our clients helps us improve and succeed … helps us determine what the next steps are
- Quality programming

LEADERSHIP
- Success comes from the top (i.e. educator/leader)and in turn we are successful
- Strong director
- Long-term vision of organization and staff

OTHER
- Job satisfactory
- Disciplinary programs
- Non-programing employees and support staff may not get as much feedback and look to other events to measure success
- The administrative staff many times hear feedback and many times it is not positive

What do you value most about yourself, your co-workers and about the organization?

SUPPORT
- New employee values the co-workers ability and willingness to help
- Willing to help each other – mailings, etc. equipment repairs, etc.
- Supervisor is supportive
- Supports professional development
- Dependability
- Mentorship
- Camaraderie
- Service orientation within org
- Promotion of employees becoming best they can be
- Can do, happy to help attitude
- Team work with backup
- As a classified employee - civility, inclusivity and teamwork - treated as colleague
- Culture of sharing with others of what we know
- Chance for growth and support
- Working as a team, no matter what your position.

- Mutual respect no matter what your role.
- Interdisciplinary collegial support, in performance evaluation as well as in
  programming
- Okay to fail
- Support to not burn out
- Willingness to help each other, learn from each other, cooperate with each other
- Knowing you have someone at your back internally
- Team player attitude
- Approachable & supportive supervisors
- Learning how to collaborate
- Feeling appreciated -- coworkers say
- Room to grow as individuals and in our positions
- Teamwork
- Technology
- Willingness to share resources
- Connections
- Co-workers are helpful
- Support for being taken out of the "combat zone" "Don't be afraid to fail"
- Resourceful
- Support/encouragement

RESPECT/DIGNITY
- Respect for all workers
- Support of coworkers and organization
- Feeling valued

OPENNESS
- More than one idea can count
- Extension is less intimidating that the rest of the university system. We are more approachable to the common person.
- Good people - good hearts
- Genuine
- People are very real
- The comfort level in the work place
- Loves their co-workers
- Individualism and part of a team
- Honesty
- The human connection -- deep sharing and caring
- Honesty
- Administrations openness, transparency

MISSION
- The organization provides true research that we can depend on
- Public interaction – we work with anyone who comes in

- We value education
- Dynamic
- Assist others with professional development that may not receive external
  professional development ex. Master Gardeners
- The extension makes the university research work in a practical matter
- Society as a whole tends to be very short sighted. extension's role is to help
  the people understand the impact of small changes today
- Information
- Brain-storming to look at integrative programming
- Creativity
- Willingness to help in any area
  their creativity and for the best result of the organization
- Caring about communities (what happened, responding)
- Desire to help
- Patience -- focus on the long term outcomes
- Developing collaboration with other groups and agencies
- Diversity of organization

LEADERSHIP
- Participatory leadership – open door – not top down
- Positive attitude and forward thinking
- Leadership skills
- Emphasis on work with volunteers

IMPACTS
- Seeing how we impact people lives on a daily and long term basis
- Clients appreciation make us feel good about our job
- We make tangible impacts
- We make a difference in people's lives
- We make a difference
- Appreciation from clients as well as staff
- Attitude of the university toward coop ext... that the value us
- Proven success within the community
- Positive feeling about the work we do

PASSION
- Passion for what we do
- Feels like we are paid volunteers
- Amount of effort put forth to help with an issue or person's problem is
  commendable
- People love what they do
- Dedication
- How passion everyone is about what they are doing. Perfect fit for the job they hold.
- Dedication to share vision or goals

- Energy and excitement
- Bringing like-minded people together
- Commitment to public service
- Dedication
- "I'm fabulous" !
- Loyalty and commitment
- Enthusiasm for work

CUSTOMERS/ CUSTOMER SERVICE
- People of the community and co-workers
- Customer service
- Customer service is important
- Importance of and commitment to customer service
- Value of the clients we serve -- internal and external

FLEXIBILITY
- Flexibility
- Adaptability, flexibility
- Freedom to do what is necessary
- Not micromanaged; trust. "Just go for it."
- Incredible support from our organization to be creative, pursue our passions,
- Flexibility
- Freedom to structure our work to our strengths or passions
- Flexibility within organization
- Flexibility --organization supports each person's way of doing their job supporting

PEOPLE
- Depth and breadth of skills and knowledge
- Conscientious
- Sense of humor
- Diversity of knowledge and experience/programs

Where might we build on our strengths for even greater results while adapting to changing conditions? What commitments will you make?

TECHNOLOGY

- Embracing technology while keeping an eye on the future and recognizing the challenges before us
- Use appropriate technology more effectively "High tech, high touch"
- Do Facebook and Twitter
- New technologies can help us collect program impacts through interaction with our clients
- Willingness to learn new technologies

- Keeping up with technologies for multiple site programs (MOVI)
- Reaching the balance between the generation that has not embraced the new
   technology with the new generation that uses it exclusively.
- Greater use of technology
- Commitment to teaching use of tech
- Implement centralized database
- Being willing to change and open to new ideas, e.g. technology, ways of doing
     things.
- Broadband throughout Maine
- Mr. Splashy Pants
- Learn and use new technology … of all types …
- Technology
- Don't let technology rule what we do and how we do it ● e.g, online interactive editing of
     documents can make us crazy :-) … just kidding

CONSISTENCY
- Working on consistency of programs and areas
- We need a uniform, consistent programs across the counties

RELEVANCE/IMPACTS

- Helping locally within your community on areas the public needs and wants
- Understanding the cost benefit of extension programs.
- Doing more programs as requested – helping identify program needs.
- Our strengths will allow us to adapt
- Being better at sharing our success
- More focus outreach (responsive to need)
- There is so much that needs to be done … recognizing our strength, determining what is the
     most important for us to do … is critical … "finding the respectful no and the creative yes"
- Make every interaction you have with a client very meaningful for them …
     they got what they needed and more … a seed of an idea, information … take
     answering client questions to a new level
- I'll look to what is needed first and answer that need.
- Commit to high impact programs
- Commit to prioritize
- Success stories / data
- Remember that we change peoples lives
- We need to have credibility with our clients!

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Taking advantage of professional development opportunities
- More professional development & prof development with technology

- Seek professional development in use of technology …
- Staff development to support new ways of doing things.
- Professional Development
- Keep up with staff development
- Keep the online trainings on-going with Adobe connect so folks can access it on their own and not miss the trainings offered
- Encourage mentoring & make it mutual; "elders" of the organization teaching newer employees, but also learning from them.
- Learn more about what all Extension does so that I can see connections to others with the work that I am doing
- Learn how to use electronic tools, but also learn best practices so that they don't rule our lives … learn how to cope with the overwhelming "noise" in the information highway … but don't do it just because we think we should
- Learning while moving forward at the same time__

INDIVIDUAL/ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES AND CULTURE

- Keeping the lines of communication open between all staff
- Having a real person answering the phone - key to communication
- Flexibility around change - adaptability
- Goal to spend less time on the computer and more time with clients
- Sending facts is not the only thing that initiates behavior change it does take that personal interaction with someone to initiate that new behavior.
- Stay positive
- Go with the flow
- Look at ways to be more efficient
- Brainstorming sessions
- Innovation
- Avoid burnout … support each other in self-care
- When I find my self thinking "how can I do more" maybe I should be thinking "how can I do what I do better, more efficiently" - build my skills, collaborate
- Dare to give up some control to our clients -- let them initiate the conversation
- Step out of comfort zone
- Let it be about the client
- Need a purpose, reason to keep working...
- I'll take the risk of failure
- Work and life balance - what are we doing in this area? This really is a personal choice in a lot of ways.
- Commitment: I'll be flexible
- I'll think out of the box
- I'm willing to change
- Stay positive
- Commit to remaining sustainable
- Remember who we work for

- Be people centered -- no program centered
- Be down-to-earth with what we offer
- Need extension editor
- Question our assumptions -- encourage others to do the same -- internally, clients, collaborators
- Commitment to self-care
- Focus on the relationship we build with our client
- Make self-care less taboo as a topic for individuals or the organization.
- Building interpersonal relationships
- Decrease isolation of staff
- More opportunities to build relationships
- Policies to increase Self-Care to avoid burn out
- Meeting challenges of budget reductions
- Take care of yourself so you can be in a better space to support your office
- Do my best work... if you do your best, whatever happens will be for the best !
- Take care of myself by making more time for family, physical fitness, etc …
- Make the time to take a break as a staff … e.g., take a "retreat day" as a staff to work on the things that don't ever seem to get done … new ideas that need some attention to determine if they are viable or not, inter-personnel issues,
- Get outdoors, less screen time … practice what we preach to our kids!
- Strengthen - how to communicate well, be open to change

MARKETING

- Marketing needs to be improved upon
- Reaching difficult to reach audiences - many times we are preaching to the choir
- Make what we do more visible
- Commit to stay visible
- Commit to tell our story - be self promoting
- Toot our own horn
- Be conscious of being an Ambassador for the university and Extension

DEVELOPMENT

- Partnering with fundraising and programs
- Planned Giving

COLLABORATIONS

- Encourage more interdisciplinary programming.
- Engaging volunteers on what they are able to offer and sharing with clients
- Program collaboration
- Colleagueship
- Build on volunteer relationship

- Multidisciplinary programming.
- Cross-county and cross-programming sharing of best practices.
- Volunteer Development
- Maintaining strong relationship with county officials, particularly re: budget
- Utilizing volunteer strengths
- Continue to build cross-disciplinary work … connect the pieces … growing food, with nutrition, with partnering, etc is a good example
- Support USDA in staying nimble and responsive by hearing from us about what we are hearing from our clients, what we see as the emerging local, community, regional needs
- Fostering volunteer efforts for sustainability
- More collaborations/integration between programs
- Increase collaborations with other organizations