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The Organisational Development Tool: Sport and Recreation New Zealand's quest to create successful and sustainable organisations

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Background

The Organisational Development Tool (ODT), created by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC), is an improvement process supported by a software tool. It involves a five step process which supports the advancement of successful and sustainable sport and recreation organisations (SPARC, 2009a; SPARC, 2009b; and SPARC, 2009c), similar to Lewin's three phases of planned change (Campling, Poole, Wiesner, Ang, Chan, Tan, and Schermerhorn, 2008). Organisational development is a comprehensive approach to planned change and to the quest for continuous improvement of an organisation's ability to deal with environmental changes, problem solving capabilities, and internal relationships (Campling et al., 2008 and Samson and Daft, 2008).

The ODT offers a comprehensive review of capability providing a clear direction for national, regional and club level sport organisations wanting to improve their performance (SPARC, 2009a). The framework contains six review modules, leadership, planning, customer focus, sport delivery, people management, and sport management (internal), ensuring all facets of the organisation are assessed (SPARC, 2009b). In using the ODT organisations are provided the opportunity to benchmark themselves against best practice across the full scope of their current and potential activities. Open-ended questions are applied to each module which provides a realistic assessment of the organisation and enables the identification of areas of good practice, strength and opportunity, and development and improvement.

The ODT specifically looks for:

- 1 A connection between the organisation's purpose and its activities
- 2 A focus on customers (participants) and stakeholders
- 3 A systematic approach to organisational activity
- 4 Effective use of performance measures to drive improvement
- 5 Results achieved

6 Continuous improvement and a focus on the future (SPARC, 2009b, p. 4).

Objectives

As approximately 32 sports at national, regional, and club level are participants in this study and complete the assessment tool during various lengthy timeframes, a case study approach using data collected from the sport of netball will be examined. The aim of this paper is to examine the use of the ODT in netball's progress towards best practice. Organisations like netball will be able to improve on their priority areas, and recognise and share their best practices with other organisations.

Methods

In this quantitative study two trained facilitators guide the use of the Organisational Development Survey Tool in face-to-face interviews recording responses on the ODT software. Organisations are invited or volunteer to participate in the study and are given the opportunity to be re-assessed after a period of time such as a year. The open process assessments take from three hours to two days to complete. Netball New Zealand volunteered to participate, and asked 45 of their member organisations to complete the assessments which took 236 hours to complete (1 NSO – 14 hrs, 12 Regions – 96 hrs, 5 Franchises – 24.5 hrs, 28 Centres (clubs) – 91 hrs). Netball does not have any plans to re-assess as the initial assessment was conducted to get a 'state of the nation' overview of the sport.

Assessments fit into one of six scoring bands, world class, high performing, sustainable, developing, initiating, and absent, which identify the level of the organisation's capability and performance. These scoring bands are adapted from the world recognised Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence used by the New Zealand Business Excellence Foundation.

Results

Netball New Zealand rated high in the 'sustainable' band indicating "the organisation has processes that should ensure ongoing capability to meet operational needs and stakeholder expectations without being exposed to unnecessary risk" (SPARC, 2009c, p. 7). This is a very high ODT rating.

Three of the five franchises rated equal in the 'sustainable' band and the other 2 rated in the 'developing' band. Regions were split with half rating as 'developing' and half as 'sustainable'. Centres had a wider scoring range with five in the 'initiating' band and the others split between 'developing' and 'sustainable'.

The mean ODT score for all assessed netball organisations sees them at the top of the 'developing' band which is higher than most sports. Netball's ODT scores show a real strength across the sport.

Conclusion/Application to Practice

The data collected from netball is still in the process of being analysed. Netball historically has strength in resources, players, and ability indicating more capability than many other less-resourced sports.

In general outputs of the ODT include raised awareness of priority areas for organisational improvement, resources to support addressing these areas, and the ability to measure the improvements achieved. These outputs contribute to building a library of best practice resources and a national database for comparing and developing sector-wide performance.

Overall, initial analysis of the use of the ODT shows that capability and performance have improved when organisations have been assessed, work through a development programme and are re-assessed.

References

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