

# **Weakness - SWOT worksheet October 2015**

## **Membership**

- Few young members; be relevant and give them causes
- Recruit younger demographic, men
- More outreach activity needed to attract new members (personal touch); How do we strengthen the connection between local members and national organization? (big gap here)
- Making bonds with new members
- Insure member info is ALWAYS up-to-date, current and as accurate as can be
- Retaining members; Accuracy
- Retaining members; Members participating in EdCon
- Redesign the districts to make them easier to attend each other's events. The district meetings could be a way to get new members if we could more easily attend them
- Use our member's talents more
- Increase membership. Increase participation based on interests and skill sets.
- Unclear benefits of being a business member; If a business member becomes a life time member, then do they no longer qualify for business perks that is also unclear; Renewal invoices should be mailed as well as emailed. Maybe 60 days prior an email renewal is sent and then 30 days prior snail mail a renewal notice. Members at Large are missing/forgetting emailed renewal notices as when they are emailed they are easy to put aside and forget about; Typos in member listings and email addresses go unnoticed for lengths of time; Bounced emails go unaddressed; After National and District emails are sent, HQ could send to Delegates reports showing which emails were bounced and who didn't read the newsletter.
- Keeping our members; attracting members below the age of 55; Overcoming members' resistance to taking leadership roles
- More ways to share knowledge
- Keeping our new Members
- Get the business community more involved to inform all members about them

## **Communications**

- Keeping tabs on all the information being disseminated at the local level
- Increase communication between district & HQ
- Reliance on e-mail (lack of opened newsletters), Reliance on delegates, MALs
- Clearer communication e.g. with Essential Guide. Exactly what are the editing steps and the timeline for publication in a timely way so the info will be useful to members/units doing programs. 6 months too long. Staff training to field calls from units without going through Kat for EVERYTHING.
- Deadlines--I believe the publishing date for the Herbarist should be shifted to the beginning of the year. I feel that the way it is currently done makes us always look like we are behind to our members. It's a perception thing.

- Switch up what's sent out. New topics, cooking, horticulture
- Full time I.T. person needed
- Send out more in blog; More FaceBook posts
- Be more efficient with communicating with members, keeping up emails, contacting lapsed members; Make sure The Herbarist and any other publications comes out on time when members expect them
- Update membership directory online updated on a regular basis. Non-email members are not in touch with HSA.
- Reliance on electronic delivery. While convenient and affordable Emails are easy to overlook, ignore and forget while snail mail has "table" life. Also, we are competing with other emails/internet in general for members attention. Develop inexpensive mailers (post cards are inexpensive) to help with additional touches to members and build their connection with HSA headquarters. When members get something in hand they feel like they are getting something tangible. Mailing renewal notices along with a letter outlining all the wonderful things we have been doing offers another opportunity to engage members. Weak communication between board members. One hand doesn't know what the other hand is doing.
- Get more membership participation
- Find out more about members, how do they like to be contacted, do they like contact? When where how?
- Internet; Website

## **Marketing**

- Too many members not knowing of programs and initiatives as they do not read or understand or are too busy
- Multiple, coordinated media No defined responsibility
- Need a first class (WOW) brochure that can be used nationwide Print (find printer in membership – gift-in-kind donation/save printing cost) , more publicity in pubs that are plant related (careful selection), environmental focused orgs., NATIVE PLANT orgs.
- Put benefits on back of membership cards, send updates as they occur
- Need a focused effort
- Products offered; more giving opportunities
- We need more marketing
- Develop "elevator speech" for everyone to use
- Update website.
- Is there a marketing plan? If so it's unclear. Unit and members are left to develop their own marketing materials. We are associated with more of the culinary herbs when actually we are interested in all useful plants. Need to develop a plan that addresses our wide interest.
- Many members on local level don't know much about national offerings or who we are. They are in it as local gardening group
- Only on the web and in Herbarist. If you don't web, you're left out!
- Need more marketing
- Attract younger members...Connect with gardening groups

## **Website**

- Not easy to navigate or find the information; Make website more intuitive and user friendly
- Many members are not "digital native";
- Trailing edge technology
- Essential to be kept up to date; One person in charge of weekly oversight of this.
- Finish the new website. Letting old info linger on websites; Units' websites reflect on HSA as well.
- Info that is difficult at times to find
- Accuracy and ease of use
- Used to be harder to use with less info
- Would like to see the rollout faster
- Make website more user friendly, only put name in once to get information throughout website. Directory with a search box. Keep pages uncluttered
- Update website to make more navigable. A system needed to aid members who forget password
- Slow to roll out. Out of our control.
- Current website not transparent; difficult to navigate but there is hope with new website about to be unveiled
- Still a share of our members not in to the social media. Our web site can be hard to navigate
- In an easy manor supply names of local HSA herb gardens around the country

## **Headquarters and Staff**

- Not adequately compensated – not enough hours Increase salary and hours
- Market-rate compensation, lack benefits Career path opportunities; HQ location
- Is there a need for analysis of work/organization/being proactive rather than reactive? Why so many different requests all falling on Kat? Should the Board members go through President before contacting National? Kat seems to be pulled in many different directions??
- Hard for staff to be get to know more of the members.
- We need to increase hours as needed and stress perfection
- Need leadership that can move us into the future with the necessary skill sets;
- Accuracy
- Members don't know
- Be able to reach staff all days of the week.
- Not giving the director the credit she deserves for putting up with all of us.
- Not enough time in < 40 hr. work wk. to accomplish all that needs to be done
- Overworked and overextended. Part time hours cause lack of continuity in communication. Emails go unanswered or requests get forgotten.
- Strained relationship with some board members... Failure to see staff as an asset, help them grow
- Sometimes don't have the answer
- Be more detail oriented. Staff should maintain a neutral position with respect to board political issues.
- More of a great herb garden example...more of a showplace

## **Educational Programs and Resources**

- Not enough use/interest – get the info out to members and beyond our members
  - What is the market demand??
  - Library not meeting the needs of its members (see earlier note email.) Update and create more Power Point programs (of a generic nature) about herbs/native herbs . High quality and units would use them. PLEASE
  - Find ways to get even more members involved in educational programming, etc.
  - How can we provide a different aspect 5 days a week? Monday-culinary, Tuesday-landscaping
  - Accuracy in publications
  - More webinars
  - Remind members of the library resources; Record and offer ed.con. speakers to members after meetings for a minimal fee for those who didn't attend and offer to attendees for free
  - Train unit chairs on educational programs to train the unit members. Units not posting newsletters or items to Calendar of Events which are resources to units. Webinar on how to use/access website. Encourage use of webinars at unit meetings
  - Getting the members to take advantage of the webinars and other offerings.
- Members are disconnected with educational programs available. ;Hours of webinars exclude members that work. Offer live webinars during non-business hours to reach working members.;Herb of the Month deals with more basic herbs which is less appealing to experienced members. How about expanding into natives, wild foods, underutilized plants etc.; It would be nice to see additional follow up with the organizations that receive the grants and see follow up stories in the Newsletters.
- Get the new website up and running. Strengthen botany and hort. programs
  - Not everyone can go to Edcon. If a large district not everyone can go to gatherings. the website can sometimes make the Library difficult
  - Need to attract more attendees; Make webinars available during non-work hours

## **Annual Meeting**

- Get more participation from members
  - Are we sharing the info members want to know?
  - Cost-more and more expensive. Has anyone explored lodges/university settings, etc. All are ADA accessible today. (Williamsburg was not)) for cost comparisons
- More private gardens on tour.
- Re cost: Is it necessary to have ALL staff attend? Why not alternate years with half of staff to reduce costs (and still provide perks for staff)
  - Find additional ways for members to “give back” to the community at large. Shift focus to others somewhat. Too many meetings - diluted message at times.
  - Stressing over numbers. We need to relax as Arron would say.
  - Need to be better at cost containment (attention to detail)
  - Use more member speakers; Spread them thru the country to allow more members to attend.
  - More time between speakers and concurrent talks, more time to visit area such as

Williamsburg Use units, MAL's in the area to help plan and execute meetings

- Expensive to attend
- More hands on, have print outs available to take home or have them posted (where people see it) so we can print and take with us
- Need to attract more attendees
- Make them less expensive...and by meeting in the spring, business members are usually not able to attend

## **Financial, Technical and Human Resources**

- Develop stronger revenue streams/giving campaigns/causes
- Investment oversight Many restrictions (T/R & P/R funds) Succession plan for ED?
- Not as transparent to membership as could be (I know this is a sticky one) e.g. why has no one examined the expenses spent on Board meetings/travel, and questioned why it is 100% covered when other Boards have to cover at least part of their expenses (as a member of the Board) ? Scholarships given for those members who would be an asset to the Board and can't afford to pay their way (show documented need)
- We need a strong financial advisor. Personally, I would like to understand better what funds directly affect the programs under my chair. (Education). I hope that we understand the giving restraints as they were directed when donations were made. I am concerned that we as board members keep informed on the investment and financial history.
- We need to acquire additional funding sources; website needs to be easier and friendly, docs & resources need to be w/o error, Staff need to report by line completion of duties.
- Board leadership
- We need to get real creative and look for additional revenue generators that don't gouge our members
- We need to stay a member driven organization
- Need more staff time – use interns or volunteers
- Need to develop alternative income sources and less reliance on donors to satisfy day to day operations. Hard to recruit new board members
- Need to increase revenue; Staff stretched too thin
- How do we cut cost, fewer delegates, but how, Bare bones in the office now?
- We must be financially responsible and live within our means
- Educate the membership on how the money is spent to justify the membership cost