

THE ^{Big} SCOOP

What's happening at United Community Services Co-op

#19 – December 6, 2006

Best wishes for **Happy Holidays** from all of us at the Co-op! May the longer nights help us take time to reflect on why and how we do things. And may we emerge renewed and blessed with abundance and effectiveness in the New Year. Contact info@ucscoop.com 604-718-8292

→ To Plan or not To Plan???

In the provocative article "Why most strategic planning is a waste of time," Donald Simpson** dares to say what many are thinking. Here's a sample of his eleven reasons:

- "Think twice before working on mission, vision and values ... as most of it is either generic or it's gibberish."
- "Get the key elements of the plan on a single page..." The all too common binder-sized strategic plan is "worthless".
- "Focus the strategy conversations on insightful questions, not on analytical data. Data is important, but retrospective. It's better to focus on thought-provoking questions.

For many sector agencies, the three year wheel of CARF Accreditation is coming full circle, requiring a new round of strategic planning. How can jumping through this hoop truly serve our organizations?

Co-op consultants are currently working with several BC agencies. Contact [Tim Beachy](#) if our eye for cooperative and innovative solutions can be of service.

→ Co-op for Community Health?

Since September, the Co-op's [Jan Taylor](#) has been working on a joint project with the Hospital Employees Union called **Building Cohesion**. The goal? To serve BC's hundreds of community-based health care nonprofits – groups that provide homecare, run hospices, coordinate programs for the mentally ill, etc.

These groups want a stronger voice, and to have policy input at the provincial level. A roundtable in the Spring will explore options, including the possibility of a second tier co-op similar to UCSC.

Thank you to Vancity Community Foundation, Coast Capital Credit Union, and the Public Health Agency of Canada for funding, and to BC Co-op Assn for being a valued partner!

** Long Range Planning, Vol. 31, #3, pp 476-480 & #4, pp 623-627, 1998.

→ Buying Power for Food Security

The Co-op is collaborating with a cluster of BC organizations working for sustainable, local agriculture and greater food security.

We were invited to participate based on the Co-op's work earlier this Spring for the Ministry of Agriculture, exploring cooperative models for distribution to support local farmers.

At the heart of this collaboration is the idea that nonprofits buy tremendous amounts of food. Province-wide this buying power can be harnessed to support local producers, with significant community development and food security benefit.

Not to mention better nutrition and taste!

The first step is a survey of Co-op members – coming soon. We're asking questions like how much food you buy, where you buy it, and your interest in supporting local farmers.

The next questions are who and how to best coordinate purchasing.

The Co-op is pleased to be exploring what, if any, ongoing role there may be for the Co-op.

If you have thoughts or suggestions, feel free to contact [Tim Beachy](#).

→ Social Enterprise Conference

Don't miss early bird prices (Dec 15th) for the second Pan Canadian Conference on Social Enterprise (Vancouver, January 28-31, 2007.) It's an excellent opportunity to learn how to start new social enterprises and to make existing enterprises more successful. Here's a small sample of the conference's many special elements:

- *Elevator Pitch Sessions*: Your opportunity to get feedback from seasoned social enterprise practitioners on your social enterprise idea.
- *Hot Seat Sessions*: Learn from in-depth case studies of social enterprise success, growth and failure.

Click [here](#) for more information or to register.