



Prince Edward – Lennox & Addington Social Services

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To Whom it May Concern:

Please note that as Director of Prince Edward Lennox and Addington Social Services I have had the good fortune of engaging Heart of the Matter and Loyalist College Knowledge Centre for organizational development purposes. Having come from large organizations, and being familiar with the benefits Mission, Vision and Values Statements have in helping align and empower members of an organization, I was keen to see our department develop them - one that all of our staff would have input into, relate to, and ultimately own...

Once our organization settled into a new and significantly redefined organizational structure, it was clear that staff and management were prepared to focus on and undertake the process. As a first step I consulted with the Social Services Management Team, and asked them to provide me with credible options in terms of engaging a proven and skilled facilitator who could take on the task.

The Social Services Management Team was very quick to identify a unanimous first choice: Mark Norman. Although my management team was well-acquainted with Mark, I was not. Mark had taken many of the management team members through several courses in the Managing and Leading in a Municipal Environment program at Loyalist College. He was unanimously described by them as a diplomatic, credible, and influential facilitator.

I met with Mark and we discussed the project. I was quick to see the basis of the management team's assessment and recommendations. Mark thoroughly listened to what I believed the Social Services department needed. During this first meeting Mark immediately took the initiative to take things a step further, and asked a number of questions about the organization's structure and history, including the general themes of our recent reorganization. He tactfully suggested that a Statement of Purpose and a Values Statement approach would best address the objective helping to align and empower staff in the organization.

Mark shared that the alternative approach he suggested combined with an "appreciative inquiry" method would hold the most potential. He explained that this was because of two things. First, the traditional Mission, Vision and Values Statement approaches tend to be formal statements difficult to identify with and make real. Second, the "appreciative inquiry" method captures and focuses on the very best elements of our organization's functioning, and solidifies those elements as our desired standard. A traditional "visioning" exercise versus the "appreciative inquiry" process could inadvertently demean staff by suggesting high standards of commitment and work had not been attained yet - when in fact there were many robust examples.

During this very first meeting, I heard Mark out and confidently adopted his suggestions. It was clear he was providing sound advice based on his understanding of our business and our needs. I set out to hire an informed professional committed to helping our staff develop something relevant and meaningful, and it was clear that Mark was that person basing his advice on his extensive experience.

Mark through Heart of the Matter and Loyalist College Knowledge Centre was engaged to take on the task. Mark and his associate Gary MacDonald facilitated two staff retreats, and helped support a newly established Values and Statement Committee. The Values were quickly developed in draft, and subsequently finalized giving all staff the opportunity to

have input. Mark's genuine caring and respectfully candid approach demonstrated to all staff the sincerity of what it was we were trying to achieve, and how that would benefit all staff, our communities, and the people we directly serve. As a result of my first-hand observations I do not hesitate to highly recommend Heart of the Matter and Loyalist College Knowledge Centre to any organization interested in engaging and developing itself to be all that it can be.

Sincerely,
Brian Elo-Shepherd, Director
Prince Edward Lennox and Addington Social Services