REIMAGINING SERVICE

CONVERTING GOOD INTENTIONS INTO GREATER IMPACT

NATIONAL CORE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT TOOL DATASET

"POSITIVE DEVIANTS" IN VOLUNTEERISM AND SERVICE

Research Summary

Research conducted by TCC Group
December 2009

tcc group

ABOUT TCC GROUP

Formed in 1980, TCC Group provides strategic planning, program development, evaluation and management consulting services to foundations, nonprofit organizations, corporate community involvement programs, and government agencies. TCC Group's consulting staff includes individuals with wide-ranging expertise and experience in a diverse range of issues including education, arts and culture, community and economic development, human services, health care, children and family issues, and the environment.

From offices in New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago and San Francisco, the firm works with clients nationally and, increasingly, internationally. Services to our clients include strategic planning, organizational assessment and development, feasibility studies, program and organizational evaluation, board development, restructuring and repositioning, as well as grant program design, evaluation, and management.

TCC Group's Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT) is a 146-question online survey that measures a nonprofit organization's effectiveness in relation to four core capacities—leadership, adaptability, management, and technical capacities—as well as organizational culture. Additionally, the tool helps organizations identify their lifecycle stage and provides a real-time findings report, a prioritized capacity-building plan, and the technology to generate self-selected benchmark reports from a national database of over 1,500 nonprofit organizations. The CCAT is the most comprehensive, valid, and reliable tool of its kind, and has been used by funders and nonprofits as a planning, capacity building, research, and evaluation tool.

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- The CCAT dataset includes information from over 1,500 nonprofit organizations from across the United States. It includes local, regional, and national organizations.

- This "positive deviant" Service Enterprise research conducted in December 2009 looked at 652 qualifying organizations (e.g., organizations that had submitted complete answers to the questions reviewed for this analysis).

- The dataset includes 146 behavioral items measuring each nonprofit's leadership, management, adaptability, resources and organizational culture. It also includes 36 specific scales/measures of organizational capacity.

- All organizational leaders take the CCAT, independently and anonymously, which then gets aggregated/compiled into one report.

- This tool was created for the purpose of assessing a nonprofit organization's effectiveness in relation to four core capacities—leadership, adaptability, management, and technical capacities—as well as organizational culture, so that nonprofits can identify their lifecycle stage and build a prioritized capacity-building plan.

- The CCAT was not created for the explicit purpose of researching volunteerism and service, but rather viewed as an existing set of comprehensive organizational assessment data from which to test hypotheses about the Service Enterprise. Because the CCAT is a holistic organizational assessment tool, we believe that the findings that follow are that much richer because they can test hypotheses that the field explicitly holds about how volunteer engagement and management impact nonprofit effectiveness, as well as unearth correlations that were not assumed (i.e., the "unintended" effects/benefits of strong volunteer engagement and management).

- If you would like to learn more about CCAT and how it is used, please visit www.tccccat.com.

% of Nonprofits by CCAT Volunteer Management Score Category

Weak (< 190)
18%

Strong (CCAT Score > = 240)
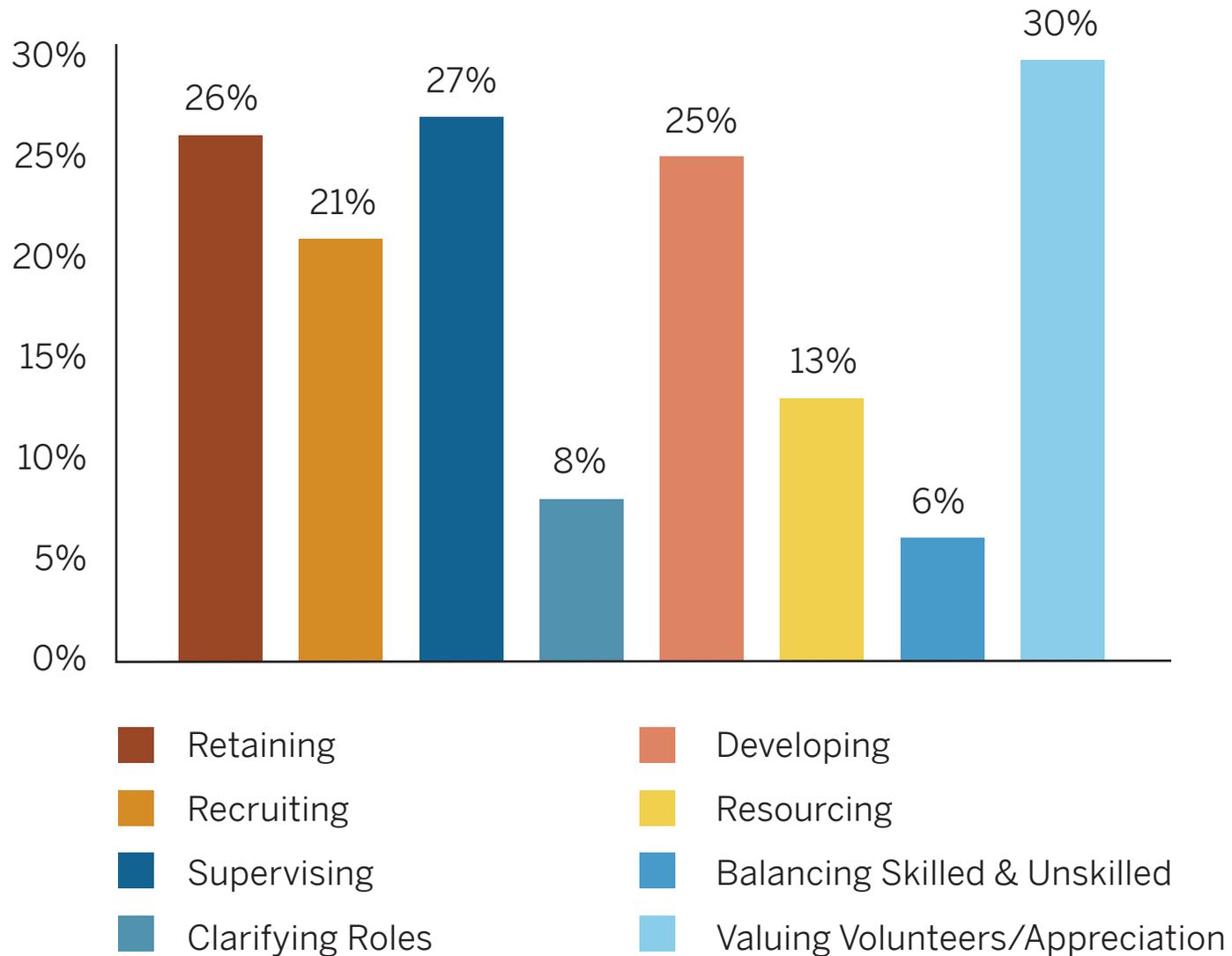**17%**

Satisfactory (190 – 240)
64%
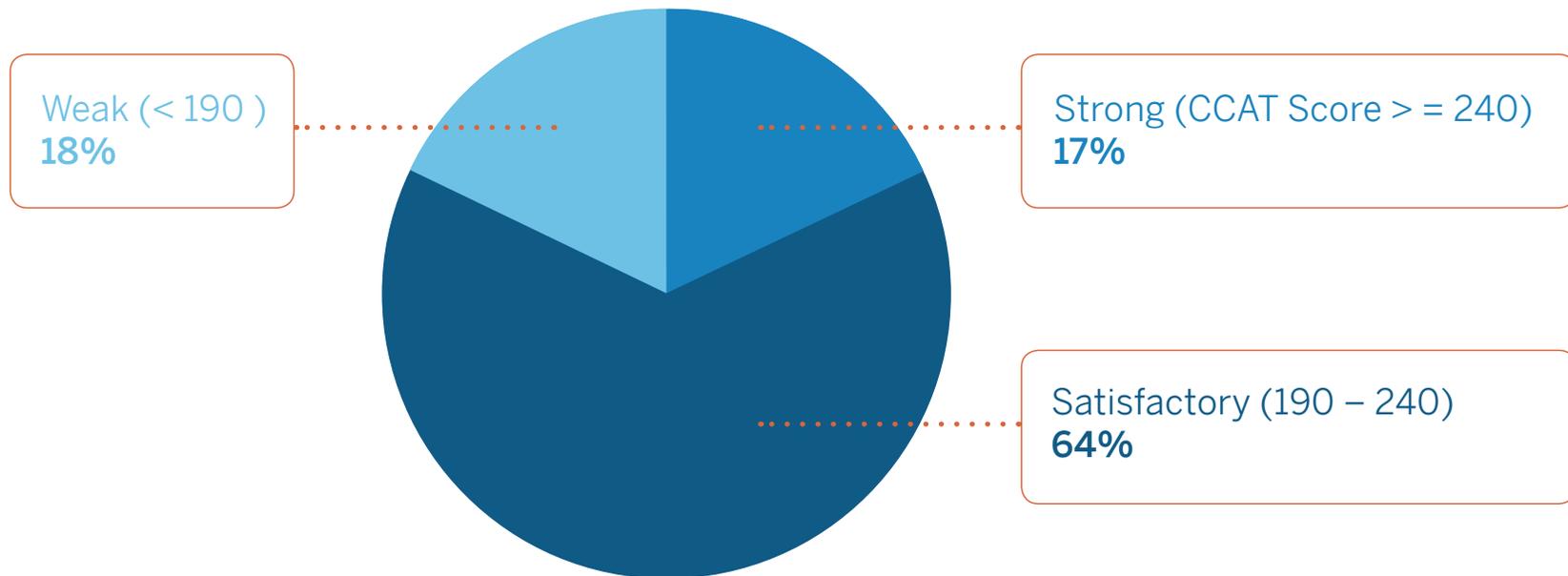
Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

Note: The volunteer management measure/scale in the CCAT measures specific volunteer management behaviors. It looks at how well an organization does with respect to recruiting, retaining, providing role clarity and direction, developing, valuing, and rewarding volunteers. A score of 240 means that all organizational leaders taking the CCAT, in aggregate, agree that all of their organization's volunteer management practices and behaviors are effective.

Percent of Nonprofits Conducting "Effective" Volunteer Management Practices

Legend:
- Retaining
- Recruiting
- Supervising
- Clarifying Roles
- Developing
- Resourcing
- Balancing Skilled & Unskilled
- Valuing Volunteers/Appreciation

Bar values: 26%, 21%, 27%, 8%, 25%, 13%, 6%, 30%

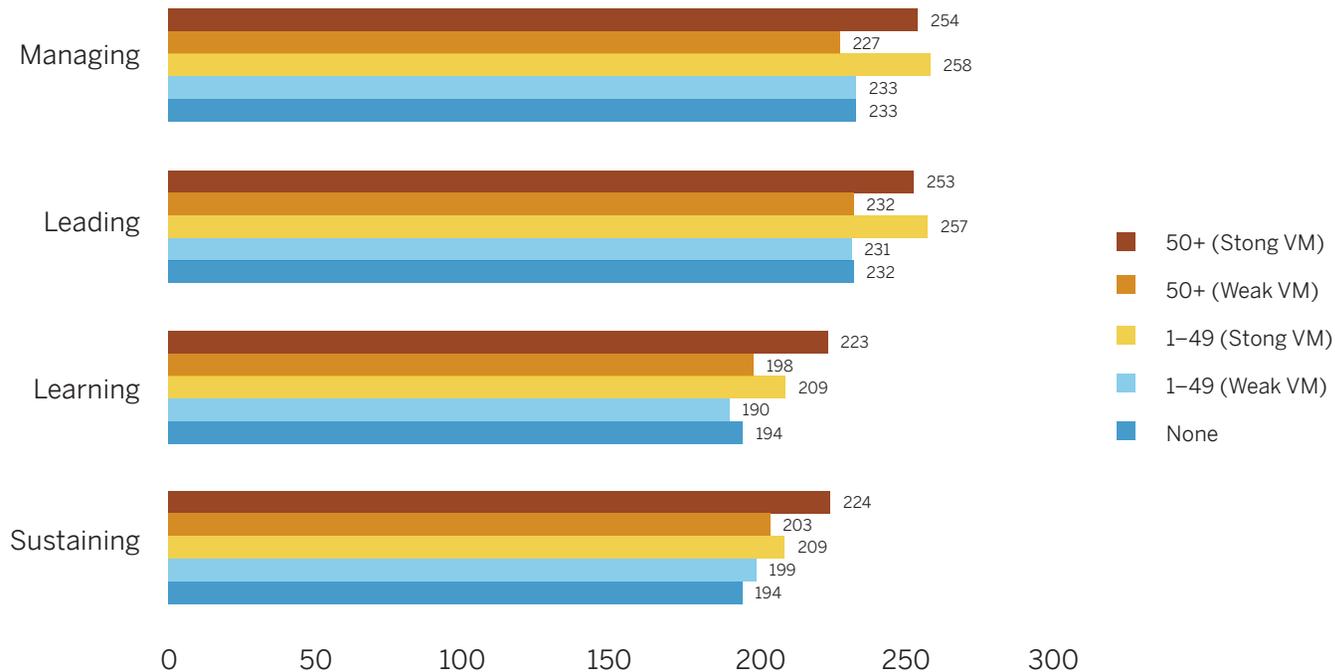**Five comparison groups were created using CCAT data:**

Categorical Label & Criteria	Possible Proxy Where the category/grouping might serve as a proxy measure for stages along the Service Enterprise continuum/pathway	Percentage of Total CCAT Organizations (N=652; there were 265 organizations w/missing data for # of volunteers)	Median (i.e., the 50th percentile) Budget
Strong Service Model (SSM) >=50 volunteers & scoring >=240 on the "volunteer management" scale of the CCAT	Strong Service Enterprise	11%	$1.3M
[Non-Strong] Service Model (SM) >=50 volunteers & scoring <240 on the "volunteer management" scale of the CCAT	Non-Strong Service Enterprise	39%	$1.6M
Volunteer Engagement (VE) >=10 but <50 volunteers, without consideration of the CCAT "volunteer management" score*	Center of Service	29%	$615K
Volunteer Involvement (VI) <10 volunteers, without consideration of the CCAT "volunteer management" score*	Ad Hoc Service	12%	$610K
[Fully Paid] Staffing Model (PM) No volunteers	No Service	9%	$1.1M

Note: TCC chose to limit the application of the criteria of "strong" volunteer management to the Service Model/Enterprise categories (i.e., the first two categories in the above table), for one primary reason: the theoretical concept of "systematic use of volunteers" is embedded in the definition of a service enterprise (and NOT a Center of Service), and therefore implies the appropriate use of the "volunteer management" score as a proxy for "systematic use of volunteers."

Are nonprofits that engage and effectively manage volunteers more sustainable, well-led, better managed and/or more adaptable (learned)?

Scores in these performance areas:

Managing
- 254
- 227
- 258
- 233
- 233

Leading
- 253
- 232
- 257
- 231
- 232

Learning
- 223
- 198
- 209
- 190
- 194

Sustaining
- 224
- 203
- 209
- 199
- 194

Legend:
- 50+ (Stong VM)
- 50+ (Weak VM)
- 1–49 (Stong VM)
- 1–49 (Weak VM)
- None

Managing = Human Resource Management, Particularly of Program Staff; Leading = Decision-Making and Inspiring; Learning = Leaders Actively Gathering and Making Meaning from Program and Operational Data; and Sustaining = Leader Perception of Financial Stability and Sustainability

Scoring: 240+ = "Strong;" 190-239 = "Satisfactory;" and <190 = "Weak"

All core organizational capacities (leadership, adaptive, management and technical) are significantly and markedly stronger for nonprofits with more than 50 volunteers AND a strong volunteer management model; this describes only 11% of all nonprofits in the CCAT database. These organizations are also significantly and markedly stronger than organizations that don't involve or engage volunteers at all.

When organizations engage AND manage ANY number of volunteers well, they are significantly better led and managed than organizations not engaging volunteers and/or doing so without managing them well. This describes 17% of all nonprofits in the CCAT database.

Of the eight volunteer management behaviors, there is significant opportunity to improve practices in the areas of balancing the use of skilled and unskilled volunteers, identifying and clarifying volunteer roles, and resourcing volunteers to do their assignments. Only 6% of nonprofits perceived that they effectively balanced the use of their volunteers' skills. Only 8% perceived they were effective at defining volunteer roles and only 13% felt they sufficiently resource their volunteers. It also is important to note that of the remaining five volunteer management behaviors evaluated, only 21-30% of organizations rated themselves as "effective," demonstrating that there is opportunity across all behaviors to improve volunteer management practices.

When an organization reaches 50 volunteers AND achieves an effective volunteer management model, not only do they lead and manage their organizations better, but they are also significantly more adaptable (i.e., reflect the capacity to be a learning organization), sustainable and better resourced (i.e., have skills, knowledge, experience, tools, and other resources to do their work). It could be argued that organizations that achieve a more systematized and institutionalized volunteer engagement and management model (i.e., learn how to be more systematic about managing large numbers of skilled volunteers) are more able to adapt to ever-changing conditions, and therefore able to sustainably "go to scale."

To achieve the level of effective volunteer management necessary to engage 50 or more volunteers (which is what needs to happen to create a significant and "scalable" change) requires strong human resource management practices. Based on the CCAT dataset, 50% of all organizations engage 50 or more volunteers. Yet, only one in five of these organizations does so with a clear and effective model of volunteer management. It appears that these organizations differentiate themselves by being better at all "best" human resource management practices. Nonprofit organizations that want the significant and sizable capacity benefits and improvements associated with having more volunteers have to improve their overall human resource management practices and behaviors more systematically in order to do so. When they do, and they engage 50 or more volunteers, they are more effective on every measure, it likely more able to "go to scale."

Organizations with 10 to 50 volunteers, regardless of whether they are managed well, are statistically equally as "effective" as their counterparts without volunteers on all measures of organizational effectiveness (capacity), yet their average (median) annual budgets are almost half. Specifically, as noted in the previous comparison group slide, organizations with between 10 and 50 volunteers have a median budget size of $615,000, while organizations with no volunteers have a median budget size of $1,100,000. This implies that organizations that break the barrier of 10 volunteers, regardless of whether they have figured out all of the best practices necessary to manage those volunteers, are equally as capacitated as their non-volunteer-based organizational peers, at perhaps just shy of half the cost. It is important to note that there are some nonprofit organizations that must function without volunteers due to the nature of their work. That said, it is important to challenge the assumption that an organization cannot aspire to a more fully "volunteer-engaged" organizational model. Lastly, it is important to acknowledge the need to conduct further rigorous research to test the cause-and-effect assumption of this important finding.