# Technology Solution: Connecting Agency Anonymous with the Millennial Generation

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Executive Summary

In order to continue relevant service provision into the future, every human service agency must ensure that it is making the proper preparations to position itself well within its environment. Since resources are scarce, the cultivation of healthy donor and volunteer relationships is a fundamental component of service provision for every human service agency. Every agency, therefore, should plan for the environmental shifts that may affect donor and volunteer relationships.

Of particular concern in environmental positioning is an agency’s relationship with the next generation of donors and volunteers. Called the millennial generation, this cohort of individuals has strong preferences and characteristics that will deeply affect their willingness to align themselves with a particular agency’s mission and vision. If an agency wants to prepare for a changing environment, providing opportunities for millennials is an excellent way to ensure that the agency will have donors and volunteers in the future.

The agency focus for this project is Agency Anonymous International. Agency Anonymous has done a great deal to assist people who are suffering around the world through the provision of humanitarian aid. The accomplishment of the agency’s mission and vision is vitally important to many people. But the agency is struggling to attract and retain members of the millennial generation for its causes. This fact alone suggests Agency Anonymous ought to reconsider the ways in which it relates to the next generation of donors and volunteers. To do so is essential for the organization. The question, however, is how best to recruit and retain millennials.

One of the characteristics that most clearly defines the millennial generation is their affinity for and understanding of technology. An agency that implements technology in a way that appeals to the uniqueness of the millennial generation stands a stronger chance of attracting millennial donors and volunteers to their agency. This attraction of the next generation of resources is one way to guarantee the agency’s success as the environment changes around it.

This paper examines the characteristics of the millennial generation, the systems and subsystems of Agency Anonymous, and concisely recommends technological solutions that will assist the agency in their task of recruiting and retaining the next generation of donors and volunteers while it also seeks to accomplish its mission in society. The recommendation outlines a three-pronged technology approach consisting of social networking tools, contact management systems, and donor-agency relationships. Included in the recommendation is a succinct explanation of how best to overcome agency obstacles that may arise during the implementation of the recommendations.

Though there are certainly some costs that will be incurred during the implementation of the technology strategy for millennial recruitment, Agency Anonymous would incur larger costs if it does nothing to encourage the involvement of the next generation of donors and volunteers.

Good, but I would have emphasized more of the solution rather than the problem in the executive summary. Readers will have a much better understanding of the problem than the solution.
Introduction

Every organization must contend with common issues in order to survive and thrive in a constantly changing and complex environment. Whether one is discussing for-profit or non-profit organizations, the problem-solving needs of an institution remain fairly consistent. Regardless of its mission and goals, an establishment must determine how to make decisions that maintain relevancy, help the business stay in tune with the broader culture, and compete for scarce resources. In order to position itself within society for lasting success, every type of organization must build upon past successes while also preparing for future environmental changes (Lewis, Packard, & Lewis, 2007).

Of particular concern among both for-profit and non-profit institutions is how to best recruit and retain the youngest members of today’s workforce. Known as the millennial generation, these young workers were born between roughly 1980 and 2000, and they have unique characteristics that must be accounted for in an organization (National Association for College Admission Counseling [NACAC], 2007). According to Bartley, Ladd, and Morris (2007), “organizations that can understand and bridge generational gaps will have the edge in the retention game,” and it is up to effective management to determine how best to recognize and build upon generational diversity in an organization. Retention of workers, however, is only a small part of the larger picture, particularly for human service agencies. Many human service agencies rely heavily upon donors and volunteers for success, so in order to maintain relevancy, these agencies must recruit young people for involvement with their programs as donors and volunteers.

Without fresh input and a proactive focus on the future of the organization, an agency will likely stagnate and die (Legacee, 2009). Any agency that is currently experiencing stagnation would benefit from actively seeking fresh ideas and input in order to stop the process of stagnation. Though there are many human service agencies that are in the stagnation phase of their organizational life cycle, the agency addressed in this paper is Agency Anonymous, a humanitarian aid organization based out of Richardson, Texas. The organization is currently meeting its mission, goals, and objectives, but lacks the involvement of members of the millennial generation, and is therefore ripe for a technological application that will align young people with its vision. This is especially true as the baby boomers, who will be heavy donors and volunteers, suddenly die off.

Therefore, the scope of this paper is to examine the factors and solutions at play in the recruitment and retention of millennial generation donors and volunteers for Agency Anonymous. Included in this examination is a comprehensive definition of the problem faced by the agency, the different stakeholders and systems involved in the solution process, and a review of effective and ineffective historical solutions. This analysis will then lead into potential solution options for Agency Anonymous, a discussion of the solutions’ advantages and disadvantages, and recommendations for a comprehensive solution, including an implementation plan. This recommendation will outline the technological application that will address the decision-making needs of Agency Anonymous as it pertains to recruiting and retaining millennial generation donors and volunteers. Good introduction.

Problem Definition

Societal Experience of Problem
Though Agency Anonymous is the agency for which the technological solution will be developed, theories regarding organizational life cycle suggest that agencies across the United States are experiencing the problem of recruiting and retaining millennial generation donors and volunteers as they look towards the future. To lay the proper groundwork for understanding Agency Anonymous’s problem and potential solution, one must first examine the theories and facts that are at play in making the recruitment and retention of millennials a primary concern in agencies across the United States.

A human service agency can only remain viable if it places itself within its surroundings in such a way as to effectively complete its mission. The ecosystems perspective suggests that an organization needs to establish a good fit between itself and its environment by borrowing from past successes, learning from past failures, and understanding the latest societal trends (Johnson & Rhodes, 2005; Lewis et al. 2007). Furthermore, the most successful organizations are those that are proactive in decision-making ahead of societal trends so they can remain uncontrolled by the environment (Allison & Kaye, 2005). According to Legacee, one third of the organizations that die out do so because they failed to plan for future societal transformations (2009). Indeed, non-profit organizations must have a clear picture of the changing needs of clients and customers, the availability of funding, and the agency’s competition in order to be proactive rather than reactive (Allison & Kaye, 2005). And since a large part of the planning process for human service agencies is centered on this maximization of scarce resources, the cultivation of a new generation of donors and volunteers should be central to the planning process of an agency.

Clearly, theory strongly indicates that an agency can only succeed through proper planning and proper positioning, and these tasks are completed when the agency acquires a rich understanding of the context in which it is operating (Lewis et al., 2007). Although theory suggests that all human service agencies will eventually have to handle this problem, hard statistics on the experience of this problem are not currently available, which is a limitation in the scope of this paper. With that in mind, it is important to examine the stated problem from the perspective that an organization must aggressively plan for the future through the use of theory and current societal facts. If an organization acknowledges that the recruitment of millennial generation donors and volunteers is an important piece of the organization reaching its mission in the future, the organization ought to look at the current environment in order to devise a recruitment plan for members of the millennial generation.

While planning for the future, a human service agency should count on the general American public to demonstrate specific tendencies that can likely be relied upon for consistency in the next several years. Overall, human service agencies can expect that the political climate of the United States will continue to move towards individualism and personal responsibility, and agencies should expect that there will continue to be limited resources in the public sector (Lewis et al., 2007). Furthermore, human service agencies will need to anticipate an influx of Baby Boomer volunteers over the next several years as this generation reaches retirement age. Though this trend appears to offset the above-stated need for the targeting of millennials, the Baby Boomer generation will only remain active in volunteering while they are young and healthy enough to do so. Once this cohort grows too old to remain highly active, a gap will exist in voluntarism. In order to maintain stability, an agency must prepare for this gap (D. Schoech, personal communication, April 3).

While these culture-wide trends certainly include and affect members of the millennial generation, there are also specific characteristics unique to people between the ages of 9 and 29 that need to be accounted for when assessing the situation and devising a strategy to solve the problem of millennial generation recruitment. The following includes a brief assessment of the millennial generation and their volunteer preferences and technology choices. Both of these areas of focus will give insight to human
service managers who desire to devise a plan for recruiting and retaining millennial generation donors and volunteers.

Members of the millennial generation have strong preferences and value systems through which they see the world, including the human service agencies with which they might be interested in starting a volunteering and/or donating relationship. This set of people value teamwork and community service (Melby, 2006). They like organizations that are flat, purposeful, allow for immediate contributions, and take the efforts of volunteers seriously (Hulett, 2006; Downing, 2006). When challenged by a task, millennials generation individuals tend to stay with an organization, particularly when group collaboration is involved and when they are counted upon to work hard (Downing, 2006; Jenkins, 2008; McGlynn, 2005). And finally, this generation has been socialized to manage a hectic schedule, and therefore they tend to have a strong preference for an excited environment in which they can multi-task (NACAC, 2007). In summary, the millennial generation strongly enjoys teamwork, purpose, and immediate consideration of their ideas by an organization.

Large amounts of literature suggest that members of the millennial generation have a special affinity for technology because of their status as technology natives. This cohort of young people is markedly skilled in using technology (Melby, 2006). They have been using the internet for their whole lives and understand the power of technology to connect people. Additionally, given their strong desire for collaboration and teamwork, the millennial generation will often use technology in the development and maintenance of an extensive social network (Downing, 2006; McGlynn, 2005). Millennials tend to thrive when they are allowed technological choices about how to engage with an organization. In fact, organizations have shown success when they allow this generation to implement technological solutions to agency problems because this approach allows millennials to both exercise their tech savvy and their desire for meaningful projects (Hulett, 2006). Finally, the millennial generation has a strong preference for technological information that is fast, gripping, engages their senses, and is on-demand (Downing, 2006). To summarize, this cohort of individuals most enjoys and uses technology when it leads to networking, allows for individuality of choice, and is readily available.

The situation faced by every human service agency, therefore, is fairly uniform. In order to prepare for the future, agencies must consider how to plan for a changing environment. The development of a donor and volunteer base ought to be a significant part of this plan due to the importance of funding in a human service agency. And in order to cultivate a donor and volunteer base in the upcoming generation of people, an agency needs to consider the problem of how to remain competitive by effectively recruiting and retaining members of the millennial generation, given current societal trends and the specific characteristics of this group.

Agency Spotlight: Agency Anonymous

Agency Anonymous is the humanitarian aid branch of Campus Crusade for Christ, International. The

![Table: Agency Anonymous Donations]

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Total Donations</th>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$8,267,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$16,040,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$19,738,508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$28,202,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$36,333,411</td>
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Figure 1: Agency Anonymous Donations

United States Headquarters in Richardson is one of six Headquarters locations around the world. This network of related humanitarian aid agencies ensures that humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and developmental aid reaches areas of the world that are deeply affected by poverty and disaster (xxx, personal communication, April 28; Agency Anonymous, 2009). Though funding increases and decreases according to global economic conditions,
Agency Anonymous has generally seen a steady increase in funding since its inception in 1991. See Figure 1 for information detailing this expansion. Numbers are provided for 2004-2008. (xxx, personal communication, May 6).

However, there are indicators that the agency is experiencing the type of organizational stagnation that has previously been outlined in this paper. These indicators are especially obvious when looking at the recruitment and retention of members of the millennial generation.

Over the past few years, Agency Anonymous has had several members of the millennial generation join staff, often only to leave within a year. Volunteers in the millennial generation have typically left within a few months of beginning the volunteer relationship, and often they are only one-time volunteers. Additionally, there are few donations to Agency Anonymous from this generation. Though some of this can be looked at as young people being indecisive about their involvement level in an organization, there is certainly a separation between Agency Anonymous’s relationship with the millennial generation and the trends of millennials. According to consultant Jayne Cravens, millennials “are quite passionate about world affairs. A look at various blogs and online communities frequented by these younger generations show a real hunger to have some impact on issues affecting the developing world. These audiences are ripe to be tapped as participants, volunteers and donors,” (xxx, personal communication, April 3). If this is the case, there must be some reason why the agency cannot seem to retain young people.

The reality is that the staff at Agency Anonymous has heard from college and high school students that they want to be involved in the mission of the organization, but there is simply not an avenue for them to be involved that appeals to their interests (xxx, personal communication, March 6). In interviewing current and former employees of Agency Anonymous about why this is the case, a common theme emerges. Time and again, these interviews suggest that the technology usage of Agency Anonymous is outdated, not user-friendly, and does not appeal to millennials (xxx, personal communication, May 5; xxx, personal communication, May 6). These indicators paint a clear picture of how Agency Anonymous is currently fitting into the changing environment. Though the agency is increasing its funding and expanding its operations, there is disconnection between the agency and the next generation of donors and volunteers. In light of theories of organizational life cycle, this must be addressed as the agency moves into the future. **Very good statement of the problem and agency.**

**Analysis**

**Systems Analysis**

Schoech (1999) defines a system as “a group of related elements in interaction.” The system of focus in this paper is Agency Anonymous, which is comprised of the United States Headquarters in Dallas, the distribution center in Pennsylvania, and the five other Headquarters locations around the world. The subsystems in Agency Anonymous system are extensive and include the departments of the agency, its donors, its volunteers, its clients, and its infrastructure. Geographically, the environment for Agency Anonymous is a basic office in City-State, but in a larger sense, the environment of the agency is the world with all of its changing needs, disasters, and resources.

A widespread systems analysis for Agency Anonymous is beyond the scope of this paper, but systems theory points to a specific way in which Agency Anonymous needs to interact with its environment in order to maximize its positive impacts. Agency Anonymous is an open system, and it interacts with its
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environment in many different ways. On one end of its environment, Agency Anonymous seeks to meet a wide variety global needs. On the other end, it relies heavily upon the support of donors and volunteers to develop the resources necessary to meet these needs. As resources enter the Agency Anonymous system from its subsystems, the staff at the agency must decide how to maximize those resources both in the office and in the environment. See Figure 2 for a diagram of this systems explanation.

Agency Anonymous has excellent reporting structures regarding incoming resources, and the agency tracks aid and programs so that every resource is accounted for. But in this systems analysis, it is clear that the agency is lacking a strong feedback loop. Though the agency is well aware of where resources go, donors and volunteers are not kept well-informed of actual worldwide impacts of their monetary, time, and in-kind donations. Very good point. The feedback loop is designed for and works well for top management, but not for volunteers.

Since the scope of this paper is to discuss bringing millennial donors and volunteers into the vision and mission of Agency Anonymous, the development of a strong feedback loop that ties inputs to outcomes will be an important part of aligning this generation with the agency.

Stakeholder Analysis

The key stakeholders surrounding this situation include Agency Anonymous, millennial generation donors, millennial generation volunteers, and clients of Agency Anonymous. Each of these groups has a profound impact on the situation depending on how they are involved.

Agency Anonymous is obviously involved because it is an agency that is attempting to recruit and retain donors and volunteers from the millennial generation in order to reach its mission and vision. Millennial donors are also an important stakeholder because in the future they will provide the majority of the funding for Agency Anonymous’ programs. As a key funding source, donors must receive proper recognition for their contributions to keep them donating year after year. At Agency Anonymous, volunteers are also important as they are key in packaging humanitarian aid, running the distribution center, and distributing aid around the world. In 2008 the estimated dollar value of a volunteer hour
was projected at $20.25 (Value of Volunteer Time, n.d.). And clients, of course, are involved because without proper preparation for the future, services and programs run by Agency Anonymous to serve those in need of humanitarian aid will be cut back. The following includes a brief overview of these stakeholders’ capacities, needs, and the decisions they will need to make. The proposed solutions will keep the capacities and needs of each stakeholder in mind as they address the decisions that each stakeholder must make.

- **Stakeholder Capacities**
  - **Agency Anonymous:** Clearly stated mission and vision and a corresponding plan for achieving it, large networks, and employees with a desire to reach mission.
  - **Millennial Generation Donors:** Highly educated, interested in giving, long-term likelihood of increasing donations, *used to sifting through substantial information about a problem or decision before acting*, savvy about which causes to support monetarily, and an extensive network.
  - **Millennial Generation Volunteers:** Adept in technology, flexible, collaborative, cause-oriented, and committed when given a chance to contribute.
  - **Agency Anonymous Clients:** Willing to ask for help, resourceful, active in bringing change to their lives.

- **Stakeholder Needs**
  - **Agency Anonymous:** Self-sufficient and trustworthy volunteers, volunteers who care about the vision and mission, flexible times for volunteer opportunities.
  - **Millennial Generation Donors:** Affirmation, competition, support, consistent communication about results.
  - **Millennial Generation Volunteers:** Feedback, consistent communication, attention, and affirmation.
  - **Agency Anonymous Clients:** Information about agencies, support from the agency, knowledge of how they are progressing.

- **Stakeholder Decision-Making**
  - **Agency Anonymous:** As a social service agency providing humanitarian programming around the world, decisions that need to be made include 1) how the agency will market their volunteer programs to millennial volunteers, 2) how many volunteers they need in order to have the program run successfully, 3) how to revise the agency’s mission to be consistent with the values and volunteer habits of millennials, and 4) how the agency will retain the volunteers that have been recruited.
  - **Millennial Generation Donors:** The individuals who are a part of the millennial generation have much to offer, but because the majority of this generation is still in school or just graduating, they typically do not have much extra time or money. Therefore they will have to decide 1) which organization has a mission and vision that they believe in, 2) how much they are able to contribute, 3) where their money or items will benefit the most people, and 4) which kind of tax deductions are available.
  - **Millennial Generation Volunteers:** Members of the millennial generation are currently inundated with a wide variety of causes to partake in. Though members of this generation are prone to multi-task and potentially divide their time amongst a variety of causes, time and resource limitations will demand that they make choices about which causes to prioritize. Therefore, millennial generation volunteers must decide 1) which organizations would benefit most from their involvement, 2) which organizations would
be the best use of their time and energy, 3) which organizations have a mission and vision in which they can believe, and 4) which organizations will allow enough freedom of involvement options to support the natural inclinations of this generation.

- Agency Anonymous Clients: In general, clients must decide 1) whether or not to receive services from Agency Anonymous, 2) whether or not to continue receiving services from Agency Anonymous once the client-agency relationship has begun, 3) whether or not to resist services from the agency, and 4) whether or not to refer friends and family to Agency Anonymous for services.

Each of these stakeholders are a subsystem in the overall functioning of Agency Anonymous, and each stakeholders’ capacities, needs, and decision-making ought to be considered as an important piece of the proposed solutions to the problem.

**Review: Historic Solutions**

Examples of technology solutions for building donor and volunteer support in a human service agency abound. There are three brief examples, however, that elucidate the potentials and the problems of either utilizing or underutilizing technology as it relates to the millennial generation. The example agencies in this review of historic solutions are the United Way, Habitat for Humanity, and Alertnet.

The United Way has been a partner institution to community organizations and has sought to disseminate funds and volunteers in order to meet pressing community needs (United Way, 2009). As such, the United Way serves as an agent for community members who desire to be involved in volunteering and donating. The organization has done a great deal of good in American society, but there are questions that arise when assessing the viability of the United Way given current societal trends and the characteristics of the millennial generation (Brilliant & Young, 2004). If the United Way is asking this generation to volunteer and donate by stepping into a mold, they will likely be disappointed with the turnout of millennials. There is not a technology in use by the United Way today that allows millennials to connect with the agency in a way that resonates with their generational characteristics, and therefore the agency will likely be disappointed in the coming years with the participation of millennials. The United Way’s solution of merely updating technology without updating the means through which millennials can be involved with the agency is not an effective way to plan for the future.

The next example agency in this review is Habitat for Humanity, a faith-based organization that builds houses to combat homelessness and poverty (Habitat for Humanity, 2009). This agency effectively uses technology that appeals to millennial generation donors and volunteers, and therefore has seen a great amount of participation from young people. Also, their vision is in tune with millennials. The technology usage of Habitat for Humanity allows volunteers to post videos and chats on the website, communicate with other volunteers in their area, take part in house-building competitions amongst social network teams, and to become involved immediately with the mission and vision of the agency. This usage of technology appeals to the characteristics of millennials while also not neglecting older participants. Habitat for Humanity effectively uses technology to build social networks and grassroots support from participants, which are key tasks in preparing for the future.

Finally, AlertNet is an excellent example of utilizing technology in a way that is interesting to millennials while also helping agencies maximize resources in the field. AlertNet is actually an agency that is affiliated with Reuters and works to connect humanitarian aid agencies and workers that are active in
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providing relief around the world (AlertNet, 2009). The agency maintains a website and allows users to subscribe to a Listserv that is intended to maximize communication between aid workers. Furthermore, AlertNet assists aid workers in uploading videos and photos to the website and to the Listserv. A worker for the International Federation of the Red Cross stated that utilizing images and stories in communication with donors and volunteers is instrumental in building support, and AlertNet is the way he chose to do so (Khan, 2001). This usage of technology appeals to millennials because of the social networking, fast-paced nature of the application, but it is also very useful for agencies trying to accomplish their mission in the field.

This brief review of historical technology solutions for human service agencies undergirds the evidence previously presented in this paper. In order to remain viable into the future, an agency must utilize technology to bring millennials into the mission and vision of the agency. However, when an agency prepares to bring millennials in through the usage of technology, the organization is not merely pandering to the preferences of young people. In fact, the agency is preparing for the future and using technology to accomplish its mission by maximizing both incoming resources and agency outcomes.

Solution Options

To this point, there has been a great deal of background information on the problem of connecting millennial donors and volunteers with the mission and vision of Agency Anonymous. As the discussion of possible solutions begins, one must keep in mind all of the previously mentioned theories, facts, and contingencies that will impact the proposed solutions. The following solutions seek to keep in mind the capacities, needs, and decisions of the involved stakeholders, the review of historical solutions, and all of the logic that is surmised through the paper to this point. That said, the following is a logic model that takes previous discussion and dilutes it into concise statements that point to specific solutions.

Logic Model

- If successful organizations are proactive rather than reactive, and
- If successful organizations plan for future environmental changes, and
- If funding and resources are an important piece of Agency Anonymous’s environment, and
- If funding and resources are limited for Agency Anonymous, and
- If donors and volunteers are a key part of Agency Anonymous’s access to funding and resources, and
- If competing for these donors and volunteers is necessary in order to both recruit and retain them for the future, and
- If Agency Anonymous must know its environment in order to effectively compete, and
- If the current environment is changing in regards to volunteer and donor preferences, and
- If the current environment is changing because millennials are entering the work and volunteer force, and
- If the Baby Boomer generation will only be active in volunteering for a relatively short period of time, thereby leaving a volunteering and donating gap, and
- If the current environment will only continue to change as generations turn over and the millennial generation takes power, and
- If the wise use of technology is important in bringing millennial generation resources into the mission and vision of Agency Anonymous, and
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- If a review of historical technology suggests that technology usage that supports millennial generation involvement helps the agency accomplish its larger goals, and
- If a feedback loop is an important part of utilizing technology to connect with millennial generation participants,
- Then Agency Anonymous must create a plan for recruiting and retaining the millennial generation in order to accomplish its mission,
- Then Agency Anonymous and its stakeholders must make decisions based upon the capacities and needs of the agency, its clients, its volunteers, and its donors with the characteristics of the millennial generation in mind,
- Then Agency Anonymous needs to create a technological solution that supports social connectivity, open dialogue, and consistent feedback and communication between agency stakeholders.

Very good.
With the logic of this model in mind, the following is a brief discussion of various web-based technology solutions that will seek to involve the millennial generation in the work of Agency Anonymous.

Web-Based Connection of Millennials with Aid Recipients

Members of the millennial generation enjoy involvement with organizations that are flat and that allow immediate involvement in the cause (Hulett, 2006). The first proposed solution for involving millennials with Agency Anonymous is to develop an application on the agency website that allows for an instant connection between a donor and an aid recipient. For an example of how this application would work in practice, refer to Kiva.org. Kiva is a micro-enterprising agency that funnels micro-loans from donors to individuals who are trying to start their own businesses in order to escape poverty. The donor can immediately see who they are supporting through their gift, and hear from the recipient about what they are doing with the money (Kiva, 2009). Kiva is an excellent example of all that Agency Anonymous could accomplish if the agency chose a pilot program with which to try this model. Though it is probably too early to launch this method for giving with all of Agency Anonymous’s programs, the Child Sponsorship program that the agency runs is set up perfectly for a pilot. The agency ought to consider launching an effort in which donors can give directly to a child receiving a sponsorship online, and receive a web-based connection to blog postings from the child receiving the aid. This would be an excellent way to involve millennials directly with aid recipients while also utilizing this technology for the betterment of the entire agency. View www.kiva.org for an example of this proposed application.

The cost of this pilot solution is negligible. XXX, the child sponsorship coordinator, already writes reports and compiles information on each child available for child sponsorship. XXX is another player in this solution who is already on staff and quite capable of developing this application. The cost of evaluating the program will later be discussed in the contact management portion of this solution, but the costs incurred by this pilot program on its own have already been taken care of by the employment of staff who are able to create the application. You could give children served the MIT $200 laptop which is designed for kids in developing countries.

This solution has both advantages and disadvantages. The model for this application is directly in line with millennial generation preferences, and it stands a strong chance of attracting a wide variety of untapped-donors. It is a low-cost option that would only need to be monitored rather than managed, as the bulk of the conversation would be between donors and recipients, rather than placing the agency between the two. But there are also a few disadvantages. This method is not yet a proven option for Agency Anonymous. It would require a lot of work to bring the system to the internet, which may be
time and energy the agency does not have. Finally, this unregulated mode of communication may create difficulties for the agency as it attempts to control its image and its message online. Another disadvantage is that opening up a server to uploads, etc., makes it more vulnerable to hacking, viruses, etc. Therefore, the agency database, donor database, etc. would need to be on a different computer which was not connected to the Internet for uploading. The server that accepted postings, uploads, etc., would need to be backed up every night in case it was attacked by a hostile client or volunteer. Millennials are tech savvy and can take revenge by attacking a server.

Even though this solution has some disadvantages, overall it addresses the needs of millennials and Agency Anonymous while building upon capacities. Millennials need to know what their money and time is supporting, and Agency Anonymous needs to continue receiving resources. This option allows millennials to be involved in a way that supports their characteristics while also not depleting Agency Anonymous’s resources.

Web-Based Connection of Millennials with Agency and Other Millennials

The desire for social networking is an inextricable component of what makes millennials who they are. As such, it is vitally important that Agency Anonymous provide opportunities for millennials to network both with the agency and with each other. The encouraging news about this solution is that there are already excellent structures in place through which Agency Anonymous can encourage social networking. As of January of 2009, the web-based social network tool Facebook already had 150 million users worldwide, most of which are members of the millennial generation (Facebook, 2009). The social network blogging tool Twitter is projecting that its total number of users will increase to 18 million by the end of 2010 (Ostrow, 2009; Twitter, 2009). For more information on these social networking tools, visit www.facebook.com and www.twitter.com.

Agency Anonymous currently has a Facebook group page, cause page, Any idea of how this is working? Does anyone know? Is there anyway to tell? It would be useful to provide some additional information here, and just recently registered with Twitter. Participation in this type of social networking will allow millennials to connect with the agency and connect with each other, if they are used effectively. Currently, Agency Anonymous has not assigned anyone to actively monitor these sites, so the pages are often untouched for months at a time. The proposed technology solution for creating a social network between millennials and the agency, therefore, is to assign a staff member at Agency Anonymous to monitor involvement with Twitter and Facebook and regularly update information and cause involvement.

The cost of following through with this solution is also negligible. A recent assessment of the Communications Department at Agency Anonymous suggests that there are several staff members who currently do not have enough projects to fill their work day. not good to say about an agency or staff !! (xxx, personal communication, May 7). Simply updating the social networking sites that are already in existence for Agency Anonymous would take only a few hours each week. This solution builds on the social networking capacities of the millennial generation and Agency Anonymous’s already existent and extensive network.

The disadvantages of this solution are minimal since it does not cost any money to support these social networking applications. The only possible disadvantage is that the maintenance of social networking sites might be seen as an infringement upon the normal job responsibilities of members of the Communications Department. This dept was not mentioned earlier. Seems that the communications dept is key and maybe should have been an internal stakeholder. These solutions, as well, are
grassroots in nature and it would therefore be difficult to monitor every post and comment in such a way that the image of Agency Anonymous is under complete control of the agency. Maybe solicit someone from Second Life Virtual Abilities to help monitor. Or pay them in SL currency for their help. People with disabilities who are home bound are an untapped resource for agencies. However, the opportunities and advantages of utilizing social networking tools to their greatest potential far outweigh the disadvantages. The advantage of maximizing the buzz created through Twitter and Facebook will likely expand the name recognition of amongst millennials and bring in more donors and volunteers to the agency. Good option, but could have been explored more. For example, what type agencies if any are using Facebook well. Do some agencies seem to thrive on Facebook type networking? Did you look at other nonprofits on Facebook?

Web-Based Contact Management System

The final proposed solution is one that may not be as obviously necessary as the aforementioned solutions. This solution, however, is an important piece in ensuring that the previous solutions are not merely part of a guessing game but are rather evaluated and expanded upon in a precise manner. The implementation of a contact management system is important in ensuring longevity in Agency Anonymous’s relationships with donors and volunteers from the millennial generation.

Agency Anonymous does not have an effective contact management system for managing volunteer relationships. The donor management system is also not accessible to any staff member outside of the Development Department. But involvement with Agency Anonymous is not limited to monthly giving, and in order to maximize the development of resources, the agency must come up with a plan for capitalizing on everyone who expresses interest in working with Agency Anonymous, either through volunteering, donating, or receiving updates. It is the building of a system to manage people who hear about the agency through a Kiva application, Twitter, and Facebook that will produce longevity in the donor/volunteer—agency relationship. The agency needs to invest in a contact management staff member? System? in order to target communication to members of the millennial generation who become involved through the previously mentioned technology solutions. The proposed software for this contact management system might be is etapastery. It is web-based software that allows multiple users to access donor and volunteer information and target communication to individuals interested in involvement with the agency (Etapastery, 2009). For an in-depth look at the tools this application provides, view www.etapstery.com. How does etapstery work with social networking sites?

Though pricing varies according to the needs of the agency, the calculated cost of buying the program and making it available to five staff members is roughly $191 per month. Additional staff and hardware are not necessary for the program. In fact, utilizing an effective contact management system would likely streamline the process of communication between Agency Anonymous and its contacts by removing ineffective and time-consuming processes.

This proposed application has a few immediately noticeable disadvantages. The first obvious disadvantage is the ongoing cost of using the application. Furthermore, staff would need to learn the system, take time to transfer contacts from current systems, and have access to assistance in order to maximize the program’s effectiveness. A team would also need to meet in order to discuss and plan for how best to communicate with donors and volunteers. However, the advantages of this program vastly outweigh the disadvantages. Agency Anonymous has very passionate and savvy people on staff, but the current system is making work difficult and frustrating for them. To finally resolve the contact management issue would help the morale of staff teams that are working to develop donor and volunteer support. Furthermore, streamlined communication and management of contacts will likely
create the input of more resources for the agency, thereby offsetting the cost of the program. Utilizing etapistry’s software will meet the needs of Agency Anonymous as it tries to prepare for the future and develop a strong volunteer base. Furthermore, it will build on the agency’s already extensive network by making it possible to quickly and easily bring more people in line with the mission and vision of Agency Anonymous. Finally, placing contact management systems online will allow millennials to input their contact information directly into the internet rather than having to go through the cumbersome process of filling out paperwork by hand, which will likely increase their desire to be involved with the agency.

I would not recommend one product, but recommend that the agency get a team together, headed by the communications department or information systems dept to look at etapistry and similar products and then talk to agencies which use each product and see which fits Agency Anonymous’s needs/capacities best. You outline many of the needs well.

Recommendations and Implementation Strategy

A great deal of information has been presented, and each piece of information points to the benefits that may be gained through the implementation of the recommended technological solutions. The next portion of this paper will present a recommendation for an integrated technological strategy at Agency Anonymous, the next steps that must occur within the agency in order to implement the strategy, possible roadblocks within the implementation plan, and a proposal for the evaluation of the applications.

Concluding Recommendation

No single solution presented in this paper will accomplish the development of a millennial generation donor and volunteer base on its own. Rather, this author’s recommendation is that Agency Anonymous implement a combined approach of each of the three presented solutions.

First, contact etapistry in order to put this software company’s contact management services into operation. This application will create the infrastructure support for the other application solutions.

Second, develop an online giving tool similar to the Kiva application in which donors can connect immediately with aid recipients.

Third, place emphasis within the Communications Department on a well-planned approach to social networking through the use of pre-existing Facebook and Twitter memberships.

Next Steps within Agency

Though these recommendations stand to benefit Agency Anonymous substantially, any change within the agency will likely be met with resistance due to uncertainty, fear about the future, and concerns with risk-taking (Schoech, 1999). But with proper planning and building of consensus along the way with key players in Agency Anonymous, the proposed strategy may be effectively implemented.

Most human service agency employees are quite resistant to changes in IT, and will require training sessions and assistance as they make the transition from one application to another (Schoech, 1999). There are certain organizational culture issues at Agency Anonymous that shed further light on the resistance that will likely be encountered as the recommended actions are taken. As an agency, Agency Anonymous departments tend to be:
Averse to change: The Communications Department, the department that will be primarily involved in the social networking applications, tends to have a predetermined understanding of which types of communication are best. In this author’s experience, the department is often unwilling to try new types of communication, in part because the director feels overworked but staff is not—strange and because it appears easier to use communication the way it has always been used.

Apprehensive about ideas coming from millennial generation staff: Besides two or three individuals, every staff member at Agency Anonymous is over 35. Many junior staff members have felt as though their ideas and contributions are not valued (xxx, personal communication, April 28; xxx, personal communication, May 7).

Controlling of information on the web: Utilizing blog postings, video postings, and other types of web 2.0 content is difficult for the agency because the Communications Department feels the need to constantly monitor every type of posting. This disallows some of the benefits that may be achieved through grassroots social networking.

Deeply concerned about money: Spending money on an unproved and possibly risky endeavor is something that different department heads at Agency Anonymous want to avoid. It will take much convincing to prove that spending money on a contact management system is worthwhile.

With typical agency resistance to change and other implementation issues in mind, the following is a brief description of the next steps that ought to be taken within the agency in order to execute the recommended technology strategies:

Assemble an application development task force: Involve Agency Anonymous staff from each department and each age group. This task force will need to include members of the IT department who will actually be responsible for developing the applications, training staff, and running the evaluations. Directors should be informed that the task force is in existence, and they should expect a meeting regarding the findings of the committee.

Collect interviews from staff: The directors will be unlikely to approve spending money on a contact management system without proof that staff members feel the system is necessary for them to complete their jobs effectively. These interviews would illicit information about the needs of staff members regarding contact management.

Assemble a plan: This plan will assign exactly which department will be responsible for which tasks, and which staff member will be held accountable.

Call meeting with appropriate directors: This meeting will need to include every director at Agency Anonymous, but will likely turn into a discussion between the task force and the directors of the Projects Department and the Communications Department, since these are the departments that will likely be responsible for the proposed strategies. During this meeting, the task force must present the information included in this paper, along with findings from the staff interviews. This meeting will also be the time in which the plan is presented.

Present plan for implementation and evaluation: Concisely explain the implementation plan, its costs, its benefits, and the plan for evaluation and refinement of the applications. Explain the need for web 2.0 content and its likelihood of increasing millennial generation involvement in the agency.

Implement: The IT Department will be responsible for purchasing and implementing the etapetray contact management system, a member of the Communications Department will be responsible for the updating of Twitter and Facebook accounts, and the director of the child
sponsoring program will work in tandem with the website manager to develop and track the Kiva application on the Agency Anonymous website.

- **Train:** The IT Department will train involved staff members in how to best use the etapetray system. A substantial portion of this training will be simple explanations of how social networking tools work alongside the etapetray system to enhance donor and volunteer relationships. Educating staff members is central to their eventual acceptance of technology applications (Schoech, 1999).

- **Evaluate:** Conduct a performance review based upon 1) the fluctuations of donor and volunteer involvement with Agency Anonymous during the time frame for the application implementation, and 2) A survey given to staff members who use the applications (see Appendix A). The task force will decide the time frame on which to conduct the performance review.

The recommended solutions in this paper are simple, and the process of bringing them to Agency Anonymous is straightforward but time and energy intensive. Though the people responsible for the implementation of these strategies will certainly face some obstacles, a well-timed and well-planned approach for bringing these technology advancements to Agency Anonymous will increase the likelihood that they will be adopted and utilized in the development of a millennial generation donor and volunteer base.

This is a good section and it seems to be the most difficult for the agency. I think the agency needs some way to learn about the needs you point out. The task force can be that mechanism. It will need to examine kiva and other applications you mentioned. It should do conference calls with agencies effectively using the tools you mentioned. It should have vendors such as etapetray use video conferencing to explain their products.

**Conclusion**

This paper has presented the theories and realities that are coming to bear on the future of Agency Anonymous. In order to prepare for the future, the agency must begin to develop relationships with millennial generation donors and volunteers. In utilizing a three-pronged approach to technology that taps into social networking and precise contact management, Agency Anonymous will likely create relationships with members of the next generation and align itself well with the changing environment.

**References**


Value of Volunteer Time. (n.d). Retrieved April 14, 2009 from
http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html
Appendix

Appendix A: Application Performance Review


Instructions: Your department is seeking feedback on the [application name]. Please answer the following questions. Do not sign your name. Your answers will be kept confidential.

Your position or type of work: ________________________________________________________

Number of years working for organization: ____________________________________________

Number of years working in present position: __________________________________________

Indicate your agreement with the following statements by circling the appropriate number on the 1 to 5 scale, where SD = strongly disagree, D = disagree, N = neutral, A = agree, and SA = strongly agree.

Statement Agree—Disagree

1. The application was well planned. SD D N A SA
2. I know what the application is designed to do. SD D N A SA
3. The application is meeting its objectives. SD D N A SA
4. My opinions were sought as the application was developed. SD D N A SA
5. Someone on the application development committee represents my point of view. SD D N A SA
6. I have received adequate training about the application. SD D N A SA
7. Documents exist to explain the application and how to use it. SD D N A SA
8. Top management is committed to making the application a success. SD D N A SA
9. I know who to contact to voice my concerns about the application. SD D N A SA
10. The application provides the information I need in my job. SD D N A SA
11. Reports from the application are clear and easy to read. SD D N A SA
12. Reports I get from the application are accurate. SD D N A SA
13. Reports I get from the application help me make better decisions. SD D N A SA
14. The application has improved the process I go through in making decisions. SD D N A SA
15. I use the application reports as often as the application designers intended. SD D N A SA
16. If I need information from the application, I can get it quickly. SD D N A SA
17. The confidentiality of the information in the application is well protected. SD D N A SA
18. The application can quickly produce any special requests for information I might have.
   SD D N A SA
19. Fears I have had about the application have been put to rest. SD D N A SA
20. My paperwork is more up to date because of the application. SD D N A SA
21. The application has reduced the time I spend on paperwork and recording. SD D N A SA
22. The application has increased the accuracy of the data I use. SD D N A SA
23. The application has helped me stay in compliance with performance standards. SD D N A SA
24. Our agency functions better because of the application. SD D N A SA
25. I would not mind returning to the way things were before the application was developed.
   SD D N A SA
26. The application has helped me to better perform my job. SD D N A SA
27. The application has resulted in better services to clients. SD D N A SA
28. I would recommend that colleagues develop similar applications. SD D N A SA
29. Overall I am satisfied with the application. SD D N A SA

Complete the following sentences on the back of this form:

I use the application reports most often to...

The application could most be improved by...