THIRD SECTOR
New England

Fostering Success:

The Executive Transitions Program

The Third Sector New England Approach

Leadership transitions are an inevitable and critical moment in organizational life. These transitions hold opportunities for transformative change, but also for organizational missteps. Third Sector New England's approach to working with an organization during this time sets us apart from the standard search and produces *positive long-term outcomes* for organizations in transition.

Through our Executive Transitions Program, TSNE stands with your organization as you work through the transition. Our Services help you plan for the pending transition, facilitate the search and selection process, and continue to support you post-hire to help ensure a good beginning with the new leader.

We focus on identifying the best candidate for the position and on ensuring that the organization is sustainable and ready to engage with a new leader. We don't fill the job with the current job description. Instead, we work with you to define the executive role your organization needs to successfully lead the organization now and into the future. The Executive Transitions Program ensures that board and staff are in alignment, and that there is clarity on the organization's key strengths and challenges.

The result of our work is a positive, forward-looking relationship between a new executive who fits the current and future leadership needs of the organization, and an organization – staff and board – that is prepared to work with a talented new leader.

The Executive Transitions Program at Third Sector New England

The Executive Transitions Program at Third Sector New England offers a range of services to nonprofit organizations expecting to or currently undergoing a transition of the organization's executive leadership.

Our services are tailored to an organization and its unique transition needs. We offer a comprehensive strategy for managing the entire transition process from the departure of the current executive to the successful launch of the new leader. And when compared to the typical for-profit search firm, ETP offers a comprehensive array of assessment, search and capacity building services, all from one trusted source. And our services are often less expensive.

The Executive Transitions Program Posts Strong Positive Results

Leadership transitions are often a time for reflection, saying goodbye, opening new doors and evaluating where your organization is headed. This is a lot to go through for staff, boards of directors and departing executives. During the transition, TSNE's priority is to provide organizations with the support and tools necessary to cope with these changes – and to move the organization forward in a productive way.

As with any program or service, there is no concrete way to know how effective you have been without feedback from those with whom you have worked. To better understand the impact of our program, we felt it was important to measure our results. And from June 2008 to July 2010, we surveyed 67 organizations that worked with the Executive Transitions Program and asked them how we did.

Through our post-hire surveys, we found that the strong and positive feedback we received was a powerful testament to the hard work and dedication our team of consultants has put into leading an organization through a time of great uncertainty. By surveying both one month *and* one year after the hire, we capture the transition process more fully. The results of the surveys demonstrate that a leadership transition *done well* strengthens the group in multiple ways and on different levels – from improving board engagement to sharpening organizational vision.

We look forward to using the feedback, both positive and negative, to reflect on our work. It will help us evolve the program so that we can continue surpassing the expectations of the organizations that embark on a leadership transition with the Executive Transitions Program.

Deborah Linnell
Director of Programs
Third Sector New England

Hez Norton
Manager, Executive and Organizational Transitions

"From beginning to end, the executive transitions process was great – actually the best process I have been a part of as a prospective job candidate."

– Adrienne W. Cochrane
President & CEO
Urban League
of Greater Hartford

"TSNE's wealth of information on the step-by-step processes, the how to's, and their proactive approach to executive transitions was key in moving the community center forward with its executive director search while the center stayed running smoothly on a daily basis."

– Galen Snow
Past President
Little Compton Community
Center Board of Directors

"The TSNE consultant presented our strategic choices in a way that was lucid, intelligible and helped us to make good decisions along the way."

– Paul Donovan
Board Member
Massachusetts Law
Reform Institute

The Process

The **one-month** post-hire survey is designed to gauge our clients' assessment of the process of working with the Executive Transitions Program and of hiring the new executive director.

97% of respondents were satisfied with the Executive Transitions Program services.

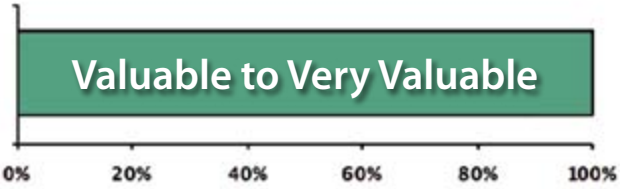
97% of respondents were satisfied with our pre-hire organizational assessment.

100% were satisfied with our ability to attract a diverse pool of candidates.

The Outcomes

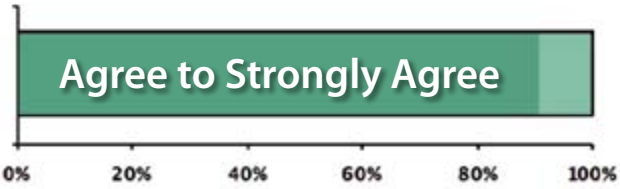
The **one-year** post-hire survey helps us to evaluate the success of the process and how strong a fit the new leader is with the organization.

100% found the Executive Transitions Program services valuable.



91% were still guided by the vision statement developed during the transition.

91% agree that the board is stronger as a result of the transition process.



"TSNE turned what could have felt like a crisis into an opportunity for us to grow and strengthen our organization."

– Tina Cincotti, Former Director of Development Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts

"The executive transitions work has positioned us to better serve our clients now and for years to come."

– Bill Weston Board Chair Rape Crisis Center of Greater Lowell

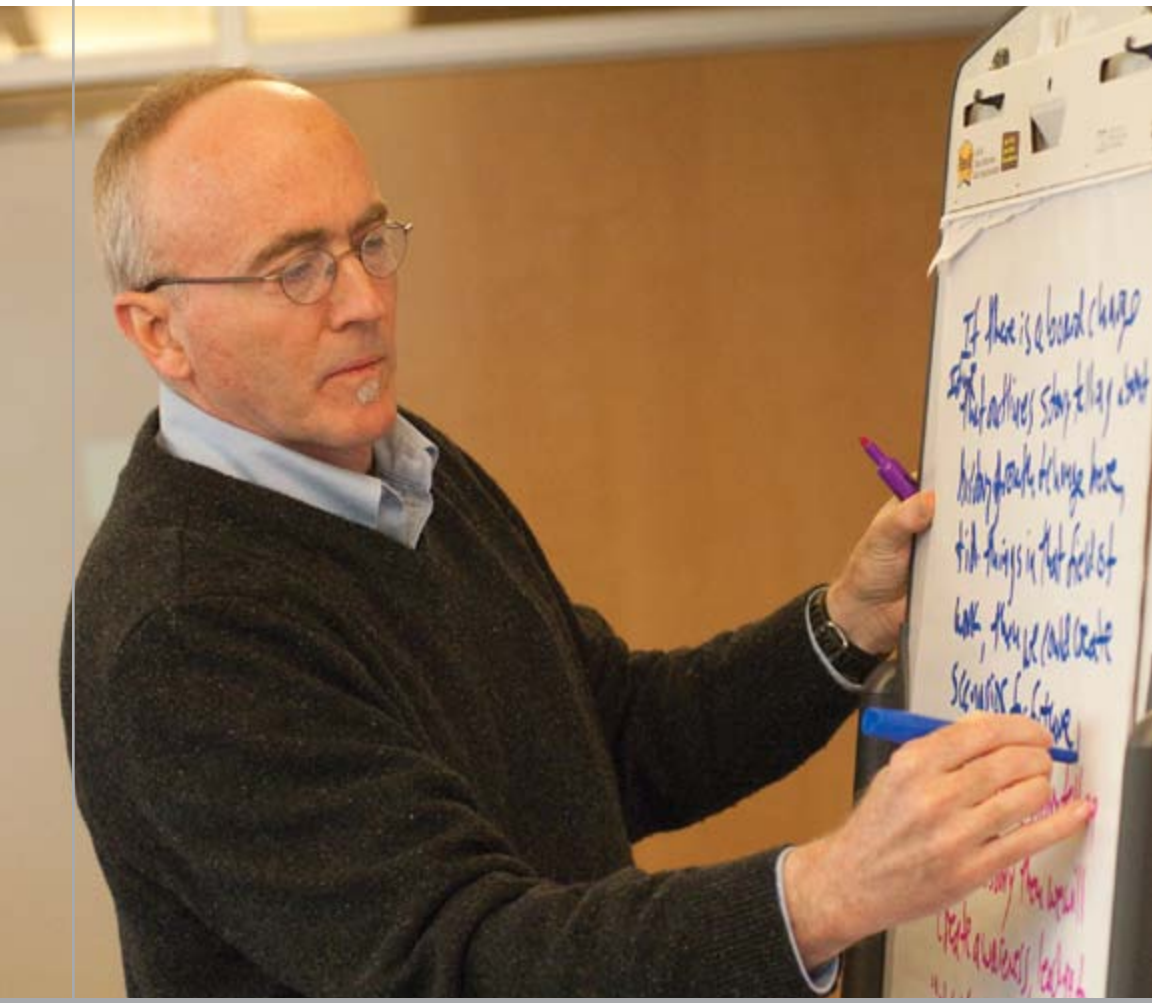
"With TSNE's help, we managed through a very difficult transition with outstanding results. Their process was comprehensive, and their staff was excellent. I honestly don't think we could have done this without them."

– Devan Dewey Board President Pathways to Wellness

About the Surveys

Third Sector New England sends clients of its Executive Transitions Program surveys one month after the organization hires a new executive director and one year after the executive director has been in place.

The survey data cited in this report was captured between June 2008 and July 2010. Seventy-nine individuals from 36 organizations responded to the one-month survey. Twenty-three individuals from 14 organizations responded to the one-year survey.



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"If it wasn't for the transition process, I don't know if the agency would be as viable as it is today."

– Jacqueline Reardon
Board Chair, Immaculate Conception Shelter and Housing

Photo: Thanks to Immaculate Conception

Contact

Executive Transitions Program

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