



## **Pillar Nonprofit Network**

### **Development of a Sustainability Plan for Professional Development Program**

#### **Phase One: Evaluation of the Current Professional Development Program**

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## Table of Contents

Purpose of Phase One .....	2
Methodology .....	2
Layout of Phase One Report .....	3
The Professional Development Program and its Fit with Pillar's Strategic Plan.....	3
Pillar's Current Professional Development Program .....	4
Number of and Attendance at Professional Development Events .....	4
Satisfaction with Professional Development Events .....	6
Topics Covered at Professional Development Events .....	6
Format of Professional Development Events.....	10
Accessibility of Professional Development Events .....	14
Earning Credits by Attending Professional Development Events .....	19
Partnerships for Professional Development Events.....	20
Process for Professional Development Events .....	22
Evaluation Process of Professional Development Events .....	23
Marketing of Professional Development Events .....	24
Budget for the Professional Development Program.....	27
Other Providers of Professional Development to .....	30
Nonprofits in London/Middlesex .....	30
Learnings from Other Capacity Building Organizations.....	30
E-Learning .....	32
E-Marketing .....	35
Summary and Recommendations .....	37

# Phase One: Evaluation of Pillar's Current Professional Development Program

## Purpose of Phase One

The overall objective of this project is to create a Sustainability Plan for the Professional Development Program at Pillar Nonprofit Network (Pillar). This includes a full evaluation of the Professional Development Program at Pillar from the past 2 years, including a financial review of the program and the development of a comprehensive marketing strategy to promote education and events for Pillar.

This report focuses on phase one of the project which is an evaluation of Pillar's current Professional Development Program.

## Methodology

A number of stakeholder groups were targeted as part of phase one of this project. The stakeholder groups that were approached were:

- Staff;
- Members of Pillar;
- Other nonprofits in London and Middlesex County; and,
- Other capacity building organizations.

A combination of 5 specific methods of inquiry were used in phase one of this project to ensure reliability and validity of the data. The methods used include the following:

- Key informant interviews;
- On-line surveys;
- Literature review;
- Best practices review; and,
- Secondary data collection.

On-line surveys were conducted with nonprofit organizations in London and Middlesex and other capacity building organizations. The response rates to these surveys are noted in the table below.

Method of Inquiry	Group	Total # of Surveys	# of Responses	Response Rate
On-Line Surveys	Nonprofit Organizations in London and Middlesex	714	119	16.7%*
	Capacity Building Organizations	95	16	16.8%

\*Note: 102 members responded to the on-line survey. This is 52.8% of current Pillar members

### **Profile of Nonprofits Who Responded to the On-Line Survey**

The majority of nonprofit organizations who responded to the on-line survey are current members of Pillar (85.7%), are located in London (94.1%), have an annual operating budget of \$1,000,000 or more (41.9%) and have attended a Pillar professional development event in the last 2 years (75.3%).

### **Responses to On-Line Surveys**

The responses to the on-line survey from the nonprofit organizations in London and Middlesex are included as Attachment A to this report.

The responses to the on-line survey from the capacity building organizations are included as Attachments B and C to this report.

## **Layout of Phase One Report**

This report is comprised of a number of main sections. Each section includes a description of Pillar's current work in the topic area and then provides findings from the on-line surveys completed by the nonprofit organizations and capacity building organizations, as applicable.

## **The Professional Development Program and its Fit with Pillar's Strategic Plan**

Pillar's current mission statement is, "To strengthen the effectiveness of the nonprofit sector". The organization's Professional Development Program is one way that Pillar is working to strengthen the effectiveness of the nonprofit sector.

In its January to December 2009 Action Plan, Pillar notes one of its actions as, "To develop an Education and Training Program that offers Pillar members professional development that is based on new knowledge, best practices and networking opportunities". Based on the response to the on-line survey with nonprofit organizations in London/Middlesex, Pillar is achieving this action. Respondents to the on-line survey noted that the main reasons for attending professional development events are:

1. General Learning/Gain Knowledge and/or Skills (76.0%);
2. Networking Opportunity (40.0%); and,
3. Innovation/Learn about New Trends and/or New Ideas (25.3%).

And more specifically, that the main reasons for attending Pillar's professional development events are:

1. Interesting Topics (32.8%);
2. General Learning/Gain Knowledge and/or Skills (25.9%);
3. Affordable Cost (24.1%); and,
4. Relevant Topics (24.1%).

## Conclusions:

There is a good fit between the Professional Development Program and Pillar's Strategic Plan, specifically Pillar's mission statement.

## Pillar's Current Professional Development Program

### Number of and Attendance at Professional Development Events

Pillar offers a large number of professional development events each year. In the last 3 years the number of events has ranged from 24 to 30 per year. Compared to the 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey, Pillar is offering more professional development events per year than all but one of the respondents (see Attachment C).

The target audience for Pillar professional development events is broader than its member agencies. Pillar also targets non-member organizations and individuals.

A large number of people are attending Pillar's professional development events. This becomes even more apparent when you compare the number of attendees to the membership numbers of Pillar.

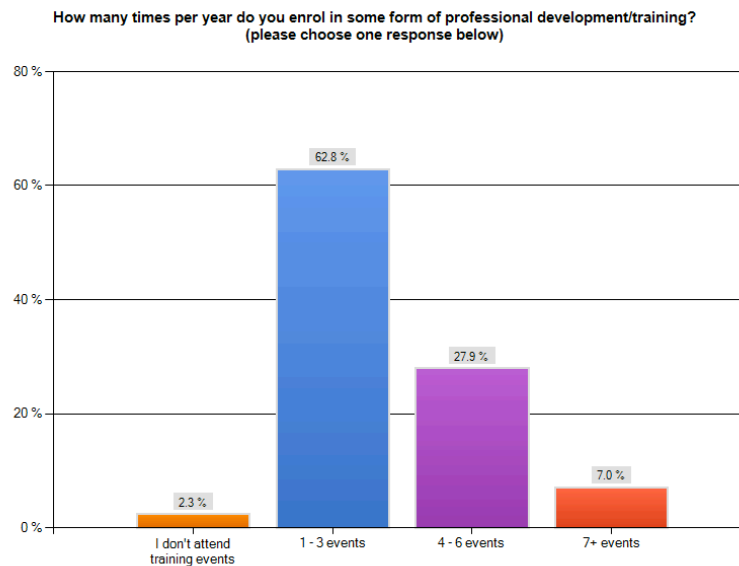
The average attendance at the events has remained fairly stable in 2008 (39.5 people per event) and 2009 (38.25 people per event), with average attendance increasing 19.7% from 2007 to 2009 (see the table below for further details).

Year	# of Workshops	# of Attendees	Average Attendees/Event	Membership
2007	26*	799	30.7	121
2008	30	1,186	39.5	166
2009	24	918	38.25	193

\* Note: Number includes 10 Board Diversity workshops

The attendance figures at Pillar professional development events speak to a high level of awareness of this aspect of Pillar's service offerings. In the 2008 Pillar Member Survey this was supported by the majority of respondents, with 73.9% noting that they know about and use Pillar's professional development workshops, seminars and events at reduced member rates.

Based on responses to the on-line survey, the majority of people working in nonprofits attend 1 to 3 professional development/training events per year, with 27.9% attending 4 to 6 events per year (see figure below).



In terms of traveling for professional development events, the majority of the respondents to the on-line survey (74.4%) travel out of town to attend professional development/training events. Based on the comments received to this question, there are some limits to the out of town travel for professional development/training events (for example: relevance, cost effective, only as far as Toronto, etc.).

With the number of people attending professional development/training events and the number of people traveling out of town for professional development events, Pillar should be ensuring that it is seen as the “organization of choice” for these types of events for local nonprofit organizations.

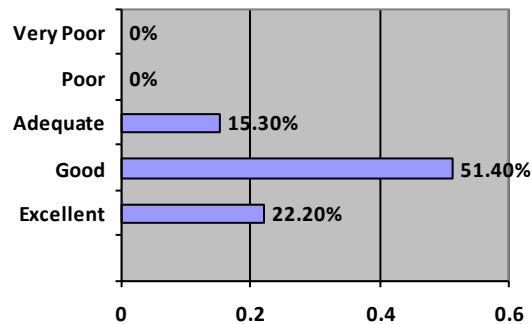
## Conclusions:

Pillar offers a large number of professional development events each year. Average attendance per Pillar professional development event has increased 19.7% from 2007 to 2009, indicating that Pillar is doing something right in terms of these events and that members are aware of this service.

With the large number of individuals from nonprofits accessing professional development and training events and the large number traveling out of town to access professional development and training, Pillar must continue to ensure that it is seen as the “organization of choice” for these types of events. Based on these findings, it appears there could be a larger market for Pillar professional development events and training.

## Satisfaction with Professional Development Events

In Pillar's 2008 Member Survey, respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the provision of professional development for staff. The majority of respondents rated their level of satisfaction as good (51.4%) or excellent (22.2%). The average rating of satisfaction was 4.63 out of 5 (see figure below).



At each of the Pillar professional development events attendees are asked to complete an evaluation form. These forms gather feedback on the knowledge level of the presenter, clarity of the presenter, information presented and the entire presentation. 353 evaluation forms were completed for the professional development events held in 2007, 2008 and 2009. From these evaluations it is clear that there is a high level of satisfaction in each of the above noted areas. The collated responses for each of the categories being rated are (note: 1 is low and 5 is high):

- 96.7% of respondents rated the knowledge level of the presenter as either a 4 (36.8%) or 5 (59.9%);
- 91.9% of respondents rated the clarity of the presenter as either a 4 (36.7%) or 5 (55.2%);
- 91.8% of respondents rated the presentation of the information in an easy to understand way as either a 4 (35.7%) or a 5 (56.1%);
- 92.6% of respondents rated the entire presentation as either a 4 (46.2%) or a 5 (46.4%).

### Conclusions:

Overall, members are highly satisfied with all aspects of the professional development events offered by Pillar.

## Topics Covered at Professional Development Events

The professional development events offered by Pillar cover a range of topics. Examples of some of the training and education workshops offered from 2007 to 2009 include:

- Media Relations Training (2007);
- BoardWorx Executive Director Program (4 workshops in 2008);
- Business Support for Employee Volunteerism (2008);
- Online Technology (2008);

- Community Conversations on Advancing Cultural Diversity in Volunteer Management and Economic Situation (2008) and a continuum of the Economic Situation (2009);
- Building Engaged Support for your Mission (2008);
- Board Orientation-Volunteering as a Leader in our Community (2008 and 2009);
- Burnout and Loneliness of Leaders (2009);
- Human Resources (2008 and 2009);
- Thriving in Turbulent Times (2009);
- Shared Services (2009);
- Risk Management (2007 and 2009);
- Market Research (2009); and,
- Grass Roots Fundraising (2009).

In addition to the range of workshops and training offered, a number of larger professional development events have taken place over the last 2 years. These include:

<b>Professional Development Event</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Board Diversity Project (2007)</b>	Project to develop and foster diversification of volunteers on Boards of Directors in London's nonprofit sector
<b>Nonprofit and Charitable Expo (2007)</b>	3 day events which showcases local nonprofits, professional development and public workshops
<b>Community Action Forum (2008)</b>	2 day event bringing together the communities of Kitchener-Waterloo, London, and Windsor to encourage dialogue and learning about: Changing face of communities; Board diversity; Benefits of cultural competency models; Making a plan for organizational change; Engagement strategies for ethno-cultural communities; Implementing diversity in a unionized environment; Building equitable leadership and partnerships and Recruitment and retention strategies
<b>Power of Philanthropy Conference (2007 and 2009)</b>	Full day Conference with workshop sessions on fundraising, leadership development, communications, volunteerism, planned giving and much more
<b>Innovation Training Series (2008 and 2009)</b>	Pillar Community Innovation Award recipients share their knowledge and experience in the areas of innovation, leadership, impact and collaboration in our community, through a dynamic training series
<b>Citi Executive Director &amp; Nonprofit Leader Breakfasts (2008 and 2009)</b>	3 breakfast sessions per year
<b>Foundation Investment Forum (2008 and 2009)</b>	Full day education and networking session which addresses the investment concerns and issues facing foundations and charities today
<b>Networking with a Purpose Events (2007 - 2009)</b>	<p>Opportunity for members to network and discuss issues relevant to the nonprofit sector</p> <p>2 networking events per year including networking event in conjunction with AGM yearly in April</p>



Professional Development Event	Description
<b>Management Tools for Nonprofits (2007 - 2009)</b>	A series of nonprofit seminars on topics relevant to the sector and nonprofit management
<b>The Charities File Project (CRA) Project (2007 - 2008) and Charities File: On Board (2009)</b>	Workshops in London and Southwestern Ontario to help charities file complete and accurate T3010A forms on-time
<b>Peer Learning Circles (2009)</b>	Brings together Executive Directors from the London area for knowledge-sharing opportunities focused on financial viability and sustainability

The range and mix of topics covered through Pillar's professional development events is broader than those covered by the 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey (see Attachment C).

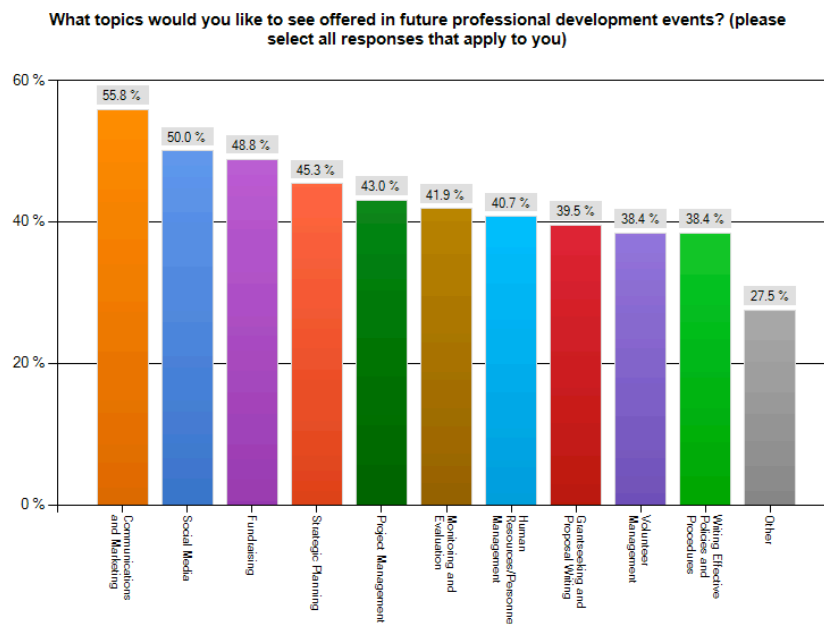
Pillar identifies topics for professional development events in the following ways:

- A survey was distributed to members in May 2008. One of the questions asked on this survey was, "What seminar and speaker topics would be helpful for professional development for you and/or your staff, volunteers, or board?";
- Other capacity building organizations will approach Pillar offering specific workshops (for example: Imagine Canada, HR Council for the Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector, Insurance and Liability Resource Centre, CanadaHelps and the Ontario Nonprofit Network);
- The Workshop Evaluation form used at the end of each Pillar professional development event asks the question, "Please provide any suggestions for topics for future events";
- Topics also come informally out of opinions expressed – what is the need of nonprofits in our community?

The way in which Pillar makes decisions regarding which topics to cover through professional development events is similar to that of the 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey. Many other capacity building organizations employ member surveys, evaluation and feedback from past workshops, requests from members and other nonprofits and trends to decide what topics to cover.

In order to get a current and more focused view of what professional development topics are relevant to nonprofits now, respondents to the on-line survey were asked what topics they would like to see offered at future professional development events. 50% or more of the respondents noted they would like to see Communications and Marketing (55.8%) and Social Media (50.0%) offered as topics at future professional development events. Topics which received interest from between 40.0% and 49.0% of the respondents include (see figure below for further details):

- Fundraising (48.8%);
- Strategic Planning (45.3%);
- Project Management (43.0%);
- Monitoring and Evaluation (41.9%); and,
- Human Resources/Personnel Management (40.7%).



Respondents were also asked to select their top 5 topics for future professional development events. Based on the responses the following are the top 5 topics respondents would like to see offered by Pillar in the future:

1. Fundraising;
2. Communications and Marketing;
3. Social Media;
4. Grantseeking and Proposal Writing; and,
5. Strategic Planning.

Other suggested topics from respondents include:

- Partnership opportunities;
- Socially Responsible Investment for Foundations;
- Ethics;
- Various topics revolving around Leadership;
- Succession Planning;
- Engaging Business;
- Client Services Related Topics;
- Some specific, topical off-shoots of Personnel Management (Team-Building; Stress Management; Healthy Workplace);
- Anti-Oppression / Anti-racism organizational practices - going deeper than just policies, but really grappling with the issues;
- Change management; and,
- Advocacy to government(s).

### **Professional Development Needs of Nonprofits**

A number of studies were reviewed to determine if there are any new trends in the professional development needs of nonprofit organizations in general. The following was ascertained:

- Canada's nonprofit and voluntary sector is the second largest in the world and there is a wide variety of occupations within the sector (a preliminary inventory has identified over 300 different occupations and professions). This has implications for the type, topic and level of professional development offered;

- Trends within the nonprofit sector include: an aging workforce, leadership deficit, cultural diversity, new generation of workers (how to build an inclusive workforce), technology and globalization and reduced government funding and increased accountability requirements;
- Over 10% of employers identified skills in the following areas as important to their organizations in the next 2 years: communication (22%); computer literacy/IT (17%); fundraising/resource development (15%); and, marketing (11%);
- Common skill gaps among nonprofits include: legal knowledge; marketing; campaigning; research; fundraising/resource development; proposal writing; leadership development; and, technical skills.

## **Conclusions:**

It appears that Pillar is cutting edge in terms of searching for and providing new and innovative professional development topics which meet the current and future needs of nonprofits in the London and Middlesex area. Pillar has a number of vehicles in place to ensure that the topics offered through professional development events meet the needs of its members and other nonprofit organizations in London and Middlesex.

The top 5 topics which nonprofits would like to see offered at future professional development events include:

- Fundraising;
- Communications and Marketing;
- Social Media;
- Grantseeking and Proposal Writing; and,
- Strategic Planning.

Based on the general trends in the area of professional development needs of nonprofit organizations, it appears as if the changing face of the workforce (aging population, new generation of workers, cultural diversity, etc.) may be a potential new topic for professional development.

## **Format of Professional Development Events**

### **Learning Formats**

At present, Pillar provides professional development and training events in the following learning formats:

- Workshops;
- Forums;
- Conferences;
- Peer Learning Circles; and,
- Executive Director and Leaders Breakfasts.

All of these learning formats utilize in-person, face to face formats.

Respondents to the on-line survey were asked what type of learning formats they had used in the past 2 years and what types of learning formats they would like to use in the future.

The following are the top 5 learning formats used by respondents in the last 2 years:

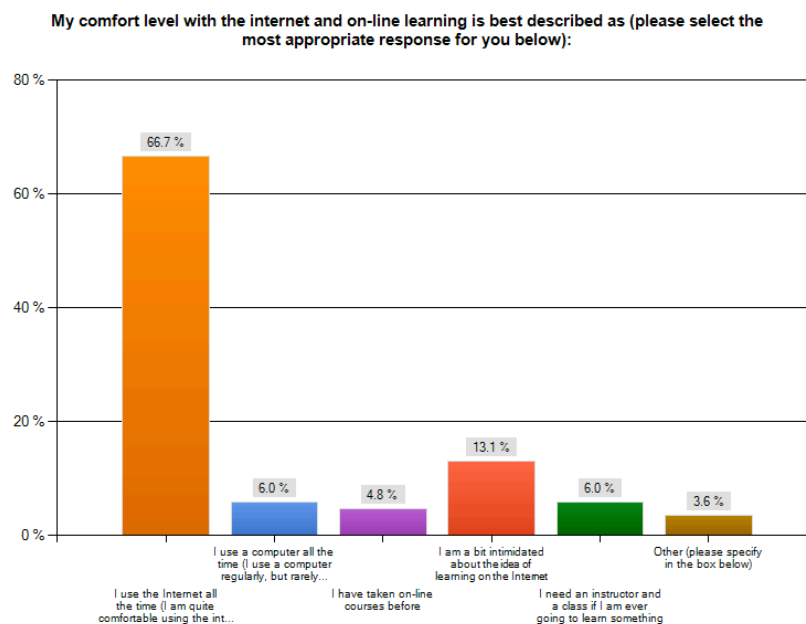
1. In-person workshop, seminar and/or conference (89.3%);
2. Webinar (51.2%);
3. In-house training at their organization (42.9%);
4. Audio conference (40.5%); and,
5. Continuing education course (35.7%).

The following are the top 5 learning formats respondents would like to use in the future:

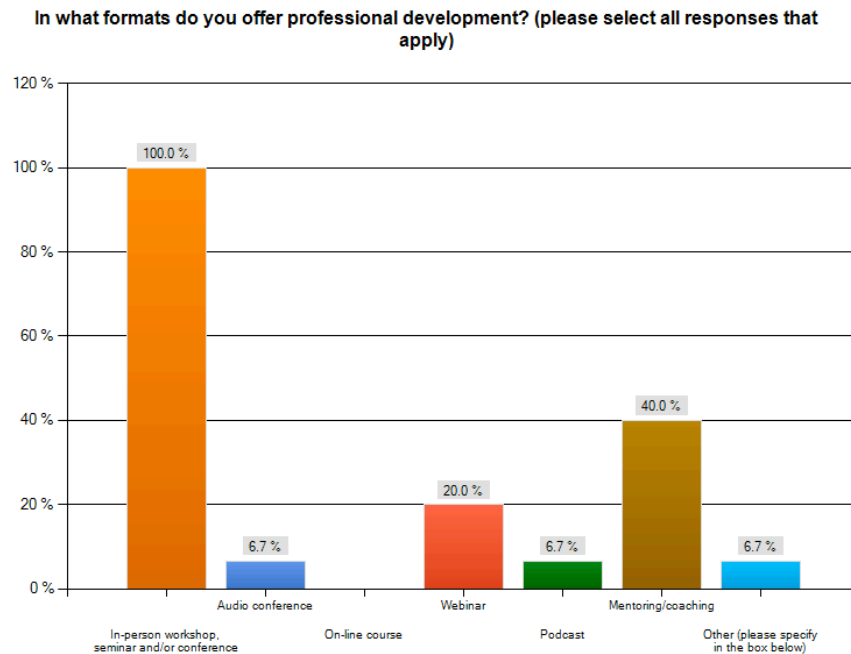
1. In-person workshop, seminar and/or conference (70.2%);
2. Webinar (46.4%);
3. On-line course (40.5%);
4. In-house training at their organization (39.3%); and,
5. Mentoring/coaching (35.7%).

The new types of learning formats added to the future list include on-line courses and mentoring/coaching. Webinars are also a learning format that Pillar should look at including in its repertoire due to the popularity of this learning format with the respondents to the on-line survey.

Using on-line as one of the mediums for professional development and training appears to be the direction and desire of nonprofits in London and Middlesex. When asked about their comfort level with the internet and on-line learning, respondents to the on-line survey noted that they have a high level of comfort with using the internet (66.7% responded that they use the internet all the time and are quite comfortable using the internet – see the figure below for further details). This bodes well for a shift to on-line learning as another learning format for Pillar.

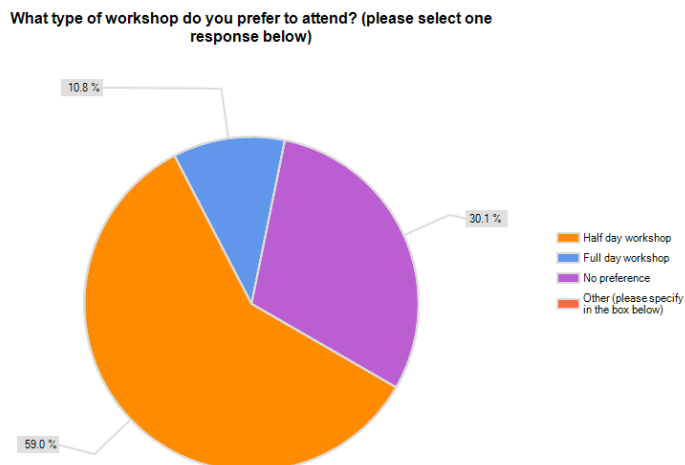


Like Pillar, all 16 of the capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey offer professional development in the form of in-person workshops, seminars and/or conferences. Other formats for professional development employed by capacity building organizations include: mentoring/coaching (40.0%); webinars (20.0%); audio conferences (6.7%); podcasts (6.7%); and peer learning circles (6.7%). None of the capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey currently provide professional development in the form of on-line courses (see the figure below for further details).



## Type of Workshop

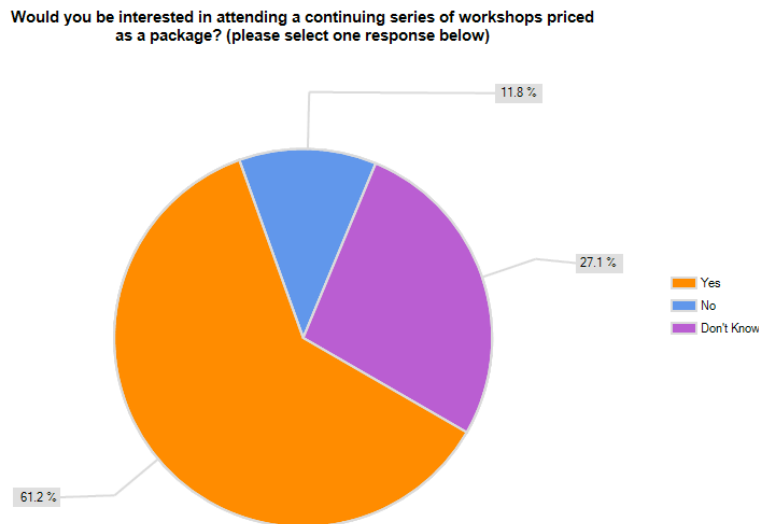
From 2007 to 2009 approximately two thirds of the professional development events offered by Pillar were half day workshops. This fits well with the needs of nonprofit organizations in London and Middlesex. Respondents to the on-line survey prefer a half day workshop (59.0%), with 30.1% having no preference and 10.8% preferring a full day workshop (see figure below).



A number of comments associated with this question noted that it would depend on the topic and the perceived worth of the session as to whether they would prefer a half day workshop or full day workshop.

### **Workshop Package**

At present, Pillar does not offer a continuing series of workshops priced as a package. When asked if they would be interested in a workshop package, the majority of respondents to the on-line survey (61.2%) noted that they are interested in attending a continuing series of workshops priced as a package (see the figure below). Respondents said that the considerations for attending a continuing series of workshops priced as a package would be topic/subject matter and cost. Respondents also noted that the series of workshops would need to be promoted far in advance in order to meet scheduling needs.



The majority of capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey (68.8%) do not have a regular continuing series of workshops offered and priced as a package. 4 of the capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey offer a series of workshops as a package. They are:

- The Centre for Non Profit Management;
- Employment Sector Council London/Middlesex;
- Community Development Halton Volunteer Halton; and,
- Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington.

Of those capacity building organizations who do offer a series of workshops as a package, the following topics are covered:

<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Topics Covered as Part of a Workshop Package</b>
The Centre for Non Profit Management	Helping the Helper Series (\$75 per full day session)
Employment Sector Council London/Middlesex	Common Assessment Process
Community Development Halton Volunteer Halton	Volunteer Management Cycle
Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington	Volunteer Management and Board Governance

## **Conclusions:**

### **Learning Formats:**

Pillar currently utilizes in-person learning formats for its professional development/training events. Based on the feedback from the on-line survey Pillar should start exploring the use of new learning formats, including webinars, on-line courses and coaching/mentoring. Some other capacity building organizations already employ these learning formats and Pillar could learn from their forays into these new mediums.

### **Type of Workshop:**

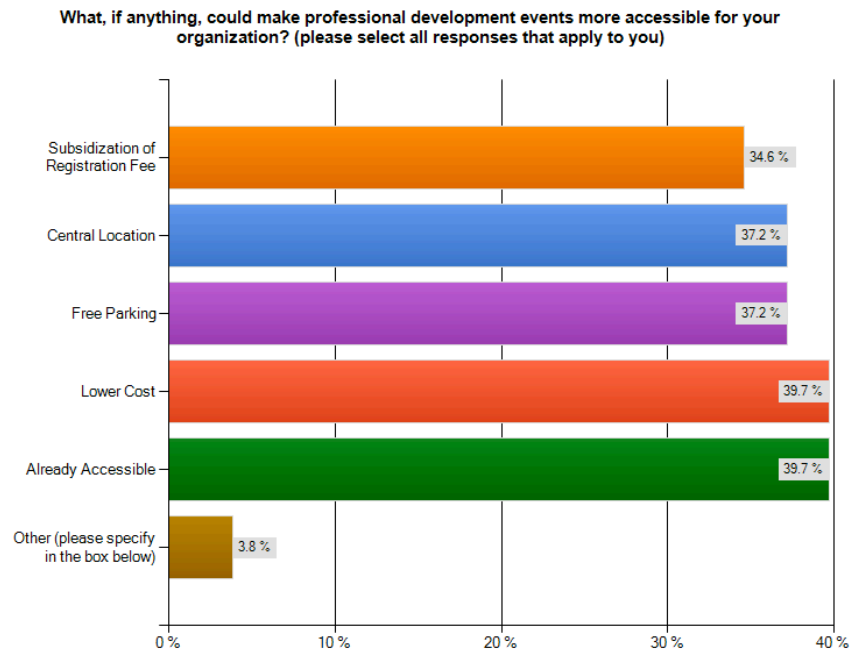
Pillar should continue to offer a mix of half day and full day workshops (depending on the topic) with the focus on half day workshops, as supported by the preference of nonprofit organizations in London and Middlesex.

### **Workshop Package:**

There is interest on the part of nonprofits in London and Middlesex to attend a continuing series of workshops priced as a package. Considerations for attending were noted as being topic/subject matter and cost. A few other capacity building organizations offer a continuing series of workshops. Pillar may be able to learn from their experiences.

## **Accessibility of Professional Development Events**

A large number of nonprofit organizations who responded to the on-line survey feel that Pillar professional development events are already accessible to them (39.7%). The features covered in the on-line survey to make professional development events more accessible for organizations all received a similar amount of support (mid 30%), with the highest rated feature being lower cost (39.7%). None of the features was noted by a majority of the respondents as being key to improving accessibility (see figure below for further details) which means a number of them may have to be considered when developing professional development events.



In terms of the accessibility factors rated in the on-line survey (see above), the majority of the venues for the professional development events held by Pillar from 2007 to 2009 were in the downtown core of London (79.7%). Although many of the events held downtown did not provide access to free parking, a number of the professional development events did.

Some specific accessibility features were looked at in more depth through the on-line survey. These are cost of the professional development events and time of day of the professional development events. It is interesting to note that 39.7% of nonprofit organizations who responded to the on-line survey said that a lower cost would make Pillar's professional development events more accessible when 71.4% of respondents feel that the current cost of Pillar's professional development events is just right (see section below for more details).

### **Cost of Professional Development Events**

Pillar charges a range of rates for professional development events depending on such factors as set costs of the event, sponsorship of the event, past rates and whether or not your organization is a member of Pillar. The 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey decide what to charge for professional development events in a number of ways as well, including:

- Actual delivery costs of the event;
- Set rates;
- Feedback from members;
- What the market will bear;
- Length of the workshop; and,
- What has been charged at past events.

A number of capacity building organizations noted that they do not charge fees for professional development events.

There was an almost even split in the 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey in terms of whether or not they have different rates for professional development events for members and non-members. 53.8% of respondents do not have different rates for



professional development events for members and non-members and 46.2% of respondents do have different rates for professional development events for members and non-members. Of those respondents who do provide different rates for members and non-members, the decision on the differential between the member and non-member rate is made in the following ways:

- Approximately 20 – 25% more for non-members;
- Based on history;
- Charge twice the amount for non-members;
- Historically the rate has been a \$25.00 difference; and,
- Members receive 20% off the non-member rate.

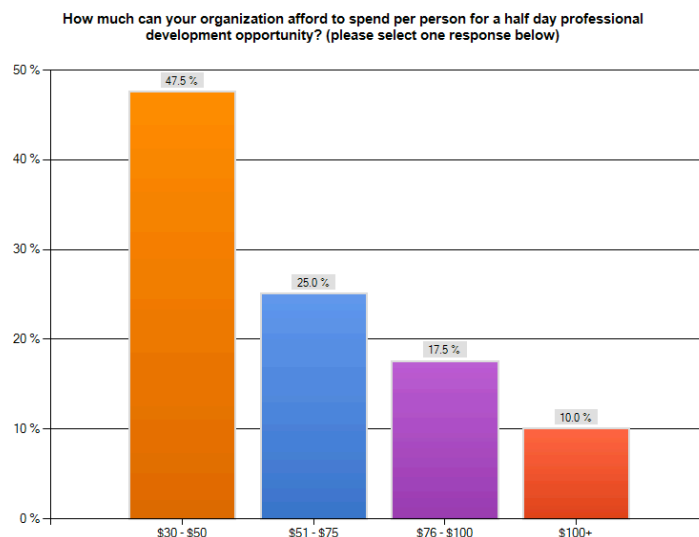
Reviewing Pillar's rates for professional development events for the last 3 years it is unclear as to how the differential between the member and non-member rate is made. The differential ranges from 0.0% for free events to non-members paying 66.7% more for other events (member rate of \$30.00 and non-member rate of \$50.00). In 2009, Pillar moved to a set differential of an additional 20% for non-members.

For a half day event, Pillar's rates for a member range from free to \$65.00 and for a non-member range from free to \$75.00. The half day rates charged by Pillar seem to be in alignment with the rates charged by other capacity building organizations. The average cost charged for a half day professional development event, as reported by the 16 capacity building organizations that responded to the on-line survey, ranges from \$0 to \$500.00 per person. Factoring out the higher end costs for professional development, the average cost charged for a half day professional development event is \$34.29.

Nonprofit organizations who responded to the on-line survey were asked how much their organization can afford to spend per person for a half day professional development opportunity. The majority of respondents (47.5%) said that their organization could afford to pay between \$30 and \$50 for a half day professional development opportunity and 25.0% of respondents said that their organization could afford to pay between \$51 and \$75 (see figure below for further details).

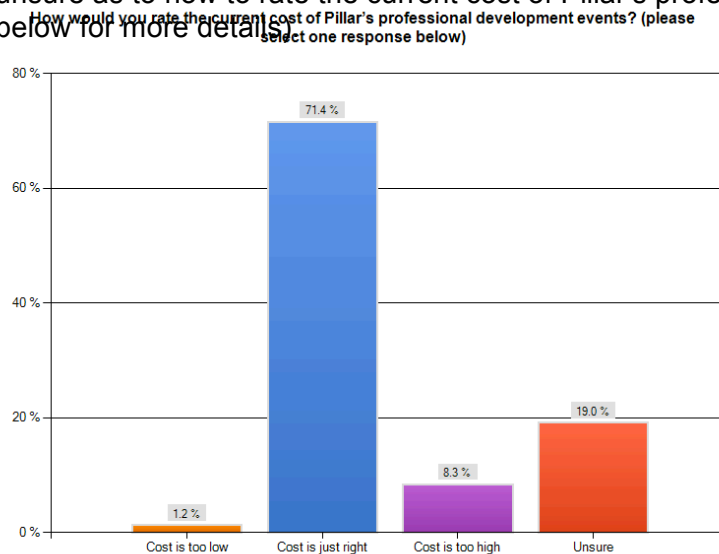
These responses are in line with what Pillar is currently charging for half day professional development events.

Based on the comments provided by respondents, the amount of money that organizations will spend on professional development opportunities sometimes depends on the perceived value of the opportunity (for example: topic, speaker, quality, length of the session).



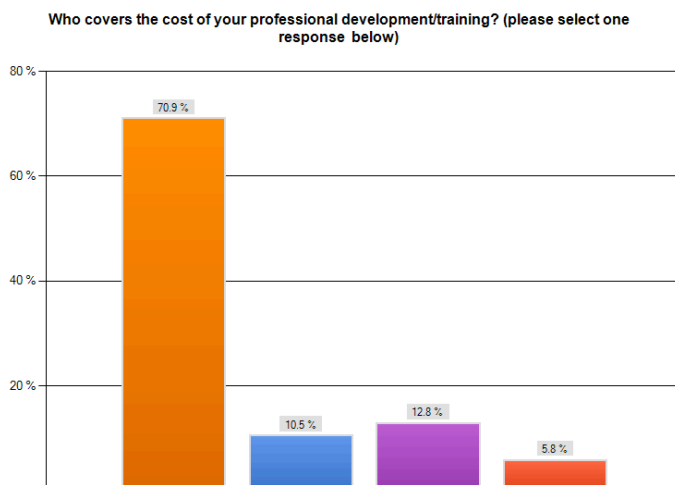
For a full day event, Pillar's rates for a member range from free to \$100.00 and for a non-member range from free to \$150.00. The full day rates charged by Pillar seem to be in alignment with the rates charged by other capacity building organizations. The average cost charged for a full day professional development event, as reported by the 16 capacity building organizations that responded to the on-line survey, ranges from \$0 to \$1,000.00. Factoring out the higher end costs for professional development, the average cost charged for a full day professional development event is \$71.00.

The majority of nonprofit organizations who responded to the on-line survey (71.4%) feel that the current cost of Pillar's professional development events is just right. Of note is that 19.0% of respondents were unsure as to how to rate the current cost of Pillar's professional development events (see figure below for more details).



From 2007 to 2009 there has not been an increase in the cost of professional development events charged by Pillar.

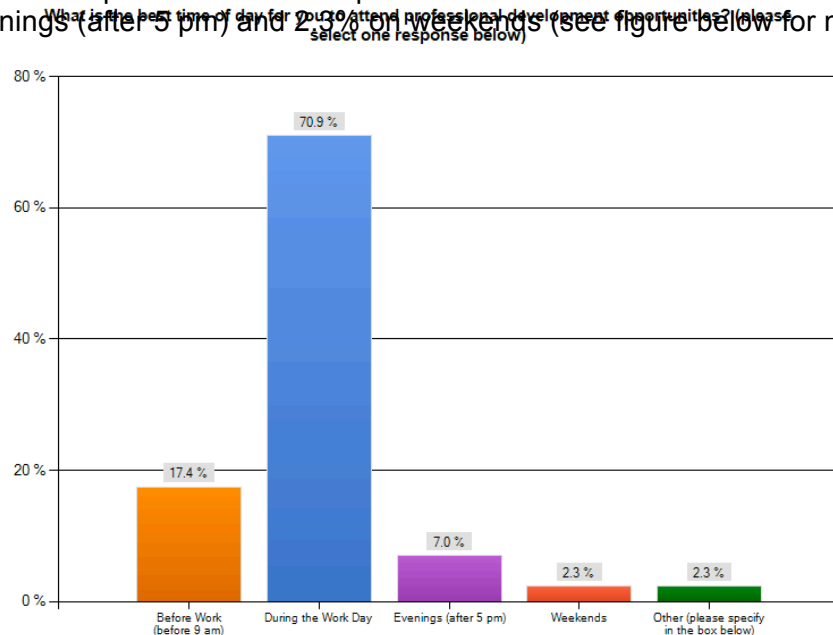
In terms of who is paying for professional development events, the majority of respondents to the on-line survey noted that their organization pays for the cost of professional development/training (70.9%). Only 10.5% of respondents pay their own way and 12.8% of respondents share the cost between the organization and themselves (see the figure below).



## **Time of Day of Professional Development Events**

At present, the majority of Pillar's professional development events are held during the day. A few events each year are held before work (typically Leaders Breakfasts) and a few are held in the evenings (typically networking events).

A large majority of the nonprofit organizations who responded to the on-line survey (70.9%) prefer to attend professional development opportunities during the work day. Only 17.4% of respondents would like professional development events to be held before work (before 9 am), 7.0% in the evenings (after 5 pm) and 2.3% on weekends (see figure below for more details).



## **Conclusions:**

### **Accessibility:**

A number of accessibility features may need to be addressed by Pillar in order to increase the perception of the accessibility of Pillar's professional development events. Lower cost, free parking, central location and subsidization of registration fees are all ways to accomplish this.

### **Cost:**

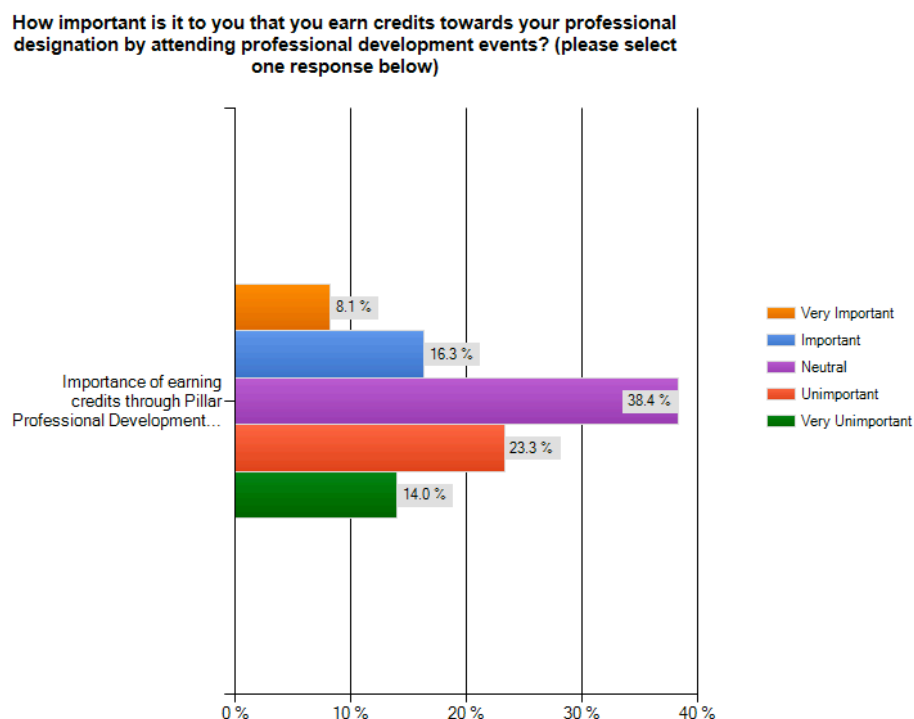
Both the rates for half day and full day professional development events vary widely by event. Nevertheless, nonprofit organizations feel that the cost of Pillar professional development events is just right and many are willing to pay between \$30.00 and \$50.00 for a half day event. Pillar charges different rates for members and non-members and, prior to 2009, it is unclear how the differential in rates was determined.

### **Time of Day:**

The majority of nonprofit organizations like to attend professional development events during the work day. Pillar's current Professional Development Program is meeting this need well.

## Earning Credits by Attending Professional Development Events

The majority of nonprofit organizations who responded to the on-line survey (75.7%) are either neutral or do not consider important the ability to earn credits toward their professional designation by attending professional development events (see figure below for further details)



## Conclusions:

For the most part, nonprofit organizations do not consider important the ability to earn credits toward their professional designation by attending professional development events. Based on this finding, this idea is not something Pillar should look at pursuing at this time due to the lack of interest on the part of respondents.

## Partnerships for Professional Development Events

Pillar partners with other organizations on some of its professional development events. From 2007 to 2009, 49.2% of the events conducted by Pillar were in partnership with another organization. Some of the organizations with which Pillar partners are:

- Nathan Garber and Associates;
- London Public Library;
- London and Region Fundraising Executives;
- London Chamber of Commerce;
- Libro Financial;
- Fanshawe College;
- Canada Revenue Agency;
- London and Area Association of Volunteer Administration;
- Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks; and,
- Imagine Canada.

Partnerships mostly develop out of past knowledge, experience or relationships that the Executive Director has with an organization or individual.

Partnering with other organizations for the delivery of professional development events is beneficial to Pillar for a number of reasons, including:

- Financial outcome (increased profit from registration);
- Shared knowledge and resources that are relevant to the current financial or social environment (for example: the partner will create marketing materials for the workshop or handle registration);
- Free or low cost presenters;
- Partner will often promote the event/workshop with their contacts. This leads to a greater reach and leads to higher registration numbers and greater awareness;
- Eliminates duplication of resources; and,
- Showcases Pillar as a community collaborator.

When contacted by another organization or individual about a possible partnership for a professional development event, Pillar considers the topic (Is it relevant? Is it a duplicate?), the current professional development schedule (Is the program full?) and the financial outcome for Pillar (What resources will be needed? Will Pillar make a profit?). Pillar makes decisions to partner with other organizations to provide professional development events for the following reasons:

- Some partners approach Pillar because they are offering a specific workshop and bringing it to different communities (for example: Risk Management, HR Council, ONN Consultation);
- The Executive Director will approach organizations or individuals based on a specific topic that is needed in the community or from an interest that has been expressed (for example: Introduction and Advanced Proposal Writing, Social Media);
- Some programs were initially created with a partner (for example: Citi Executive Director Breakfasts with Nathan Garber, Libro Nonprofit Seminars –Libro approached Pillar);
- Partner with other capacity builders when there is an overlap in target audience (for example: volunteerism related workshops – London and Area Association of Volunteer

Administration; fundraising related workshops – London and Region Fundraising Executives; Human Resources workshops – Human Resources Professionals London & District).

Pillar has a Collaboration Policy Framework that is used to assess the compatibility of a potential collaboration. This framework sets forth 4 areas in which potential collaboration partner organizations will be considered and evaluated in order to gauge compatibility with Pillar and identify risks. These areas are:

1. Strategic Alignment;
2. Collaboration Benefits;
3. Governance, Management and Organizational Practices; and,
4. Program or Service Delivery.

The majority of capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey (72%) also partner with other organizations to provide professional development events. Organizations with whom the respondents are partnering include:

- Freeforms Solutions (technology not for profit);
- London Management Area Program;
- Universities/Colleges;
- International Association of Business Communicators;
- Funders Network;
- Human Resources Council;
- Acadia Centre;
- Municipalities, Regional Municipalities;
- United Way;
- Local Association of Volunteer Administration;
- Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks;
- Volunteer Canada;
- Canadian Conservation Institute;
- Ontario Trillium Foundation;
- Volunteer Saskatoon;
- Regina Regional Intersectoral Committee;
- Local organizations, including Crisis Centres, addictions services;
- Police services.

## **Conclusions:**

Pillar uses partnerships with other organizations to offer some of its professional development events and has a comprehensive process in place to determine suitable partnerships. Pillar should continue to look for partners in the topic areas that are relevant to nonprofit organizations' professional development needs as there are many spin-off benefits to Pillar as a result of these partnerships.

## Process for Professional Development Events

The planning process for Pillar's professional development events starts with the identification of topics for the events. As noted earlier in the report, Pillar identifies topics for professional development events in the following ways:

- A survey was distributed to members in May 2008. One of the questions asked on this survey was, "What seminar and speaker topics would be helpful for professional development for you and/or your staff, volunteers, or board?";
- Other capacity building organizations will approach Pillar offering specific workshops (for example: Imagine Canada, HR Council for the Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector, Insurance and Liability Resource Centre, CanadaHelps and the Ontario Nonprofit Network);
- The Workshop Evaluation form used at the end of each Pillar professional development event asks the question, "Please provide any suggestions for topics for future events";
- Topics also come informally out of opinions expressed – what is the need of nonprofits in our community?

Once the topic for the professional development event has been identified the following steps are taken:

- Presenters are contacted to begin the planning process;
- Sponsorship is secured, if needed;
- Budget is set for the event, including determining the member and non-member cost, considering venue and catering costs;
- The date and time for the event are scheduled and the venue and speaker are booked (as part of this step, Pillar's upcoming workshops/events, as well as what is happening in the community are looked at);
- Files are created to organize all information (registration, event planning and budget excel documents);
- The event is promoted (send e-mails, add to website, newsletter, etc.);
- Process registrations for the event (record, respond, process cheques and follow up one week prior to the workshop);
- Activities on the day of the event include registering attendees, introducing the speaker and providing any assistance needed; and,
- Processes for follow up after the event include evaluation analysis, unpaid attendance, acknowledging payment received and payment of outstanding bills (venue and catering).

### Conclusions:

A great deal of work is involved in the planning for professional development events. Pillar does not have one staff position dedicated specifically to this program area.

## Evaluation Process of Professional Development Events

At many Pillar professional development events attendees are asked to complete an evaluation form. This is currently done in paper format and has a high response rate (70% to 80%). Pillar has an evaluation template (see Attachment D) which gathers feedback on:

- Knowledge level of the presenter;
- Clarity of the presenter;
- Presentation of information;
- Entire presentation;
- What attendees enjoyed most about the presentation;
- What suggestions attendees have to improve the presentation;
- Suggestions for topics for future events; and,
- Membership in Pillar.

353 evaluation forms were completed for the 2007 to 2009 professional development events. Evaluation forms are not completed at all workshops or events (for example: Networking: Business Cards to Business Relationships). In some instances Survey Monkey is used for evaluation purposes. It is mainly used for larger workshops/events (for example: Power of Philanthropy, Board Diversity Project, Community Action Forum, Board Governance and Values).

The evaluation forms are reviewed after each professional development event to see what was done well and where improvements can be made and then are saved in the workshop folder (in hard copy).

When Pillar partners with an organization to provide a professional development opportunity, usually the partnering organization uses their specific evaluation form. In some cases, Pillar provides additional comments to be included in the partner's evaluation form. The tabulated results from these evaluations are shared.

On a broader level, Pillar's Member Survey is another vehicle through which the Professional Development Program on a whole is evaluated and ideas are gathered for the program. Pillar's 2008 Member Survey asked some specific questions about the Professional Development Program. These questions were:

- Please rate your level of satisfaction with the provision of professional development for staff;
- Are you aware that Pillar Nonprofit Network offers professional development workshops, seminars and events at reduced member rates?
- What seminar and speaker topics would be helpful for professional development for you and/or your staff, volunteers or board?

The majority of capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey utilize the same methods for evaluating their professional development events, with many using paper surveys at the end of the session.



## **Conclusions:**

Pillar does a comprehensive job of evaluating its current offerings of professional development. The use of paper surveys at the end of each professional development event has garnered good response rates and helpful information about the sessions. As this appears to be a good way of gathering information, Pillar may want to review what questions are being asked to determine if these are the appropriate questions and/or if further questions should be asked (for example: How did you hear about this event? Was the level of information presented adequate? Are there other formats in which you would like to learn more about this topic? etc.).

## **Marketing of Professional Development Events**

Pillar markets its professional development events in a number of ways, including:

- Pillar's Website (events/workshops and all information posted);
- Other Websites (free on-line event postings i.e. ATV, Coffee News, The Healthline.ca, Tamarack Community Engagement, London Free Press, The Londoner, London Source, HRPLD);
- Partner's Websites (Charities File: On Board or Insurance and Liability Resource Centre);
- Eye on Charity (community calendar launched January 2009);
- E-mail to the member distribution list, non-member distribution list and other distribution lists;
- Media Releases (for larger workshops/events i.e. Foundation Investment Forum);
- Pillar's Newsletter (all Pillar workshop/events are listed first);
- Poster (created and used for Pillar's website);
- "What's Going On" pamphlet (given out at all events describing upcoming events);
- Partner provides the marketing (for example partnership with London Public Library – Library creates poster and provides marketing opportunities);
- London Free Press (Monday Business Section – Business and Training);
- Social Media (Facebook and Twitter have been used more recently for various office staff update events, photos and to send out messages);
- Networks (Networking for Inclusive Community, London Youth Service Providers, Emerging Leaders, London and Area Association of Volunteer Administration (LAVA), London Region Fund Raising Executives (LRFRE), TechAlliance, Child & Youth Network, others depending on content of workshop).

In the on-line survey nonprofit organizations were asked how they currently hear about professional development/training opportunities and how they would like to hear about them in the future. The top 5 ways organizations currently hear about professional development opportunities are:

1. E-mail (80.5%);
2. Pillar's Newsletter (71.3%);
3. Word of Mouth (41.4%);
4. Pillar's Website (37.9%); and,
5. Announcements from Professional Association (36.8%).

Based on this information, it is apparent that some of the marketing strategies currently employed by Pillar are working well (for example: e-mail, newsletter and website).

The top 5 ways organizations would like to hear about professional development opportunities in the future are:

1. E-mail (75.6%);
2. Pillar's Newsletter (54.0%);
3. Pillar's Website (29.9%);
4. Announcements from Professional Association (28.7%); and,
5. Word of Mouth (21.8%).

E-mail and Pillar's Newsletter are the top ways in which organizations like to and would like to continue to hear about professional development opportunities.

Other ways in which organizations would like to hear about professional development opportunities include:

- In association with L'Arche Canada and International;
- Our company intranet;
- Industry affiliates;
- Professional Community Committees; and,
- Charity Village.

The top 5 ways in which the 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey market their professional development events are (see figure below for further details):

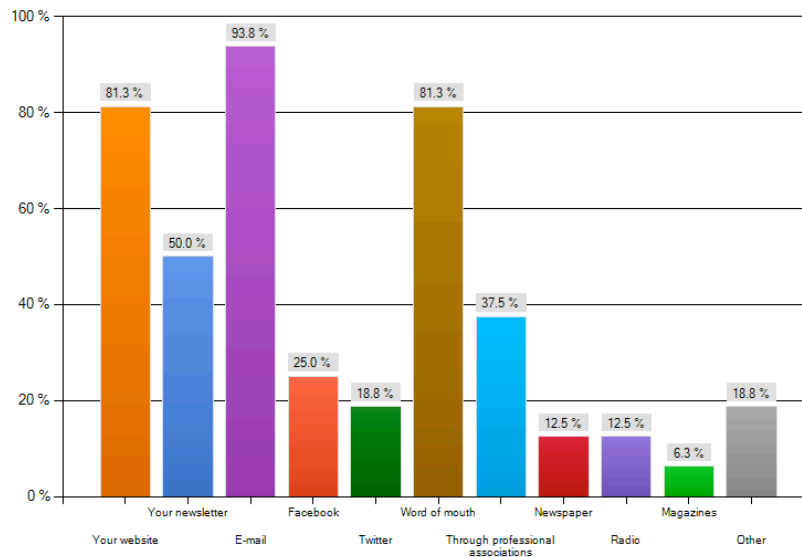
1. E-mail (93.8%);
2. Organization's Website (81.3%);
3. Word of Mouth (81.3%);
4. Organizations Newsletter (50.0%); and,
5. Through Professional Associations (37.5%).

A small number of the capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey have made a foray into using social media for marketing. 25.0% of respondents are using facebook and 18.8% of respondents are using twitter to market their professional development events.

Other ways of marketing professional development events as noted by the respondents include: direct mailouts and broadcast faxes.

The marketing strategies employed by other capacity building organizations are similar to those currently being used by Pillar.

**How do you market your professional development events? (please select all responses that apply)**



The majority of capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey feel that e-mail has had the most impact for them in terms of marketing their professional development events (68.8%). The next most effective forms of marketing as mentioned by capacity building organizations are:

- Newsletter (12.5%);
- Word of Mouth (12.5%);
- Social Media (12.5%);
- Website (6.25%);
- Direct Mailouts (6.25%);
- Fax (6.25%); and,
- Collaborating with other organizations to promote events (6.25%).

These findings are consistent with what Pillar is currently using and how the nonprofit organizations reported they would like to hear about future professional development opportunities.

### **Market for Pillar Professional Development Events**

Pillar's current membership numbers 193. The following points describe Pillar's reach in terms of current marketing for professional development events:

- 430 organizations are on Pillar's e-mail distribution list (a total of 690 e-mail addresses are on this list as there is more than one contact at some organizations);
- 175 organizations and 23 individual members receive Pillar's newsletter;
- 171 Facebook fans; and,
- 235 Twitter followers,

Based on a new database of nonprofits in the London and Middlesex area, there are 754 nonprofits who are in Pillar's potential market for professional development events. 68.7% of these nonprofits are in London and 31.3% are in the surrounding area. This is a large market for Pillar's professional development events and is an increase of 75% from the current organizations receiving information about Pillar's professional development events.

In addition to the nonprofits in the London and Middlesex area, Pillar may be able to attract nonprofits from a broader geographic reach to its professional development events (for example: St. Thomas, Woodstock, Exeter, etc.). This is a realistic proposition as 74.4% of the nonprofits who responded to the on-line survey noted that they travel out of town to attend professional development events.

## Conclusions:

Pillar's current marketing strategies for its professional development events are consistent with how nonprofit organizations want to hear about events and how other capacity building organizations are marketing their events. Pillar may need to look at refining its current marketing strategy to focus on those strategies that are having the most impact and to marketing to the wider, potential market.

There is a larger potential market for Pillar's professional development events than the organizations currently being reached by Pillar. Based on a new database of nonprofits in the London and Middlesex area the potential market could be increased by a minimum of 75% (from 430 organizations to 754 organizations).

The market for Pillar's professional development events could also be expanded by looking at serving a broader geographic area.

## Budget for the Professional Development Program

In 2007, 2008 and 2009, Pillar's Professional Development Program realized a net profit at year end<sup>1</sup>. In 2007 and 2009, the financial actuals from the program were higher than budgeted (both in terms of revenues and expenses).

	2007		2008		2009	
	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals	Budget	Actuals
<b>Revenues</b>	\$13,000	\$25,490	\$42,000	\$41,247	\$25,000	\$33,892
<b>Expenses</b>	\$2,000	\$11,648	\$16,500	\$32,209	\$8,500	\$13,028
<b>Net Profit/Loss</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>	<b>\$13,842</b>	<b>\$25,500</b>	<b>\$9,218</b>	<b>\$16,500</b>	<b>\$20,864</b>

Note: Staffing costs for the Professional Development Program are not included in the expenses. Expenses include speaker cost, venue, catering, travel, accommodations, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Note: These figures do not include the Community Innovation Awards.

Note: 2007 had revenues from the Power of Philanthropy Conference which accounts for some of the difference in net profit from 2007 to 2008.

Note: The number of professional development events offered increased by 13 from 2007 to 2008.

In terms of Pillar's overall budget, the revenue coming from the Professional Development Program as a percentage of overall agency revenue remained fairly consistent from 2008 to 2009, with an increase of over 7% from 2007. The expenses for the Professional Development Program as a percentage of overall agency expenses increased 9.2% from 2007 to 2008 and then reverted back to 6.7%.

Year	Pillar Revenues	PD Revenues	% of Overall Revenues	Pillar Expenses	PD Expenses	% of Overall Expenses	Pillar Net Position
2007	\$247,983	\$25,490	10.3%	\$227,756	\$11,648	5.1%	\$20,227
2008	\$231,760	\$41,247	17.8%	\$225,318	\$32,209	14.3%	\$6,442
2009	\$193,778	\$33,892	17.5%	\$193,754	\$13,028	6.7%	\$24

When looking at the net profit/loss for each professional development event in 2007, 2008 and 2009, 60% of the events realized a net profit, 35.4% were at breakeven and 4.6% realized a net loss (note: this is without including the staff costs associated with the events). When staff costs were included in the equation, 50.8% of the events realized a net loss over this time period.

The net revenues from the professional development events are assisting with Pillar's financial bottom line at year end, helping to put Pillar in a net surplus position.

### **Staff Involved in Professional Development**

There is not one staff position within Pillar that is solely responsible for the Professional Development Program. Due to this, the staff costs of providing this program are not captured in the expenses line of the program. This leads to the fact that the true cost of the Professional Development Program is not being captured. Current positions at Pillar assist with the Professional Development Program in the following ways:

- The Executive Director often initiates or receives requests for professional development events from other capacity building organizations;
- One team member (Administrative Assistant or Education Coordinator) plans, markets, implements and delivers the workshop/event. Which staff position assists with the event depends on the event and other office activities at the time;
- The Executive Director and one team member attend the workshop or, in some instances, the Executive Director introduces the speaker and does not attend the full event;
- If an event has more than 40 to 50 attendees 2 team members will assist with registration.

### **Sponsorship of Professional Development Events**

Pillar attracts sponsorship for many of its professional development events (see the table below for further details). From 2007 to 2009, 53.4% of its events were sponsored for a total of \$121,798. The average amount of sponsorship per professional development event has decreased by 28.2% from 2007 to 2009.

Year	# of PD Events	Amount of Sponsorship	Average Amount of Sponsorship/Event	% of PD Events Sponsored
2007	15	\$31,000	\$2,066.67	46.7%
2008	28	\$46,311	\$1,653.96	64.3%
2009	30	\$44,487	\$1,482.90	46.7%

Pillar secures sponsorship for professional development events in the following ways:

- In some cases sponsorship dollars are offered upfront to help cover Pillar's costs of the event (for example: ONN Consultation gave Pillar \$500 to cover expenses, Risk Management – Imagine Canada paid for the presenter's travel, hotel and fees);
- In other cases Pillar seeks sponsorship dollars to cover costs for a presenter, food and/or venue (for example: for Pillar's Annual General Meeting no registration fee is charged so a sponsorship helps to offset any expenses, Networking with a Purpose);
- In some cases sponsorship is secured to provide bursaries to individuals (for example: Human Resources Workshops, Power of Philanthropy Conference);
- In most cases the Executive Director will secure sponsorship dollars to cover the costs for a speaker, venue or catering;
- Some brainstorming might occur to determine an appropriate sponsor or a sponsor from a previous relationship will be approached;
- Initial contact is made via phone and a sponsorship letter or packaged is e-mailed to the individual/organization.

Some of the sponsors for Pillar's 2007 to 2009 professional development events include:

- Great West Life;
- Lerner's;
- Scotiabank;
- Citi Cards;
- Canada Revenue Agency;
- Libro Financial;
- Pathways;
- Agape Foundation;
- London Life;
- Voyageur.

## Conclusions:

As the staffing costs associated with Pillar's Professional Development Program are captured in other positions and funded through other means, the program is typically operating with a net profit. In most years, the net revenue generated through the professional development events is offsetting general operating costs of the organization and assisting with the creation of a net organizational surplus at year end. As Pillar has been operating with a surplus at year end, the professional development program may be able to look at additional resourcing for the program.

Budgeting for the professional development program needs to be more accurate and tools should be developed to assist with projections for the budget.

Staffing on the day of large professional development events can be labour intensive. The use of volunteers and other alternative means should be explored for registration at events.

## **Other Providers of Professional Development to Nonprofits in London/Middlesex**

A cursory review of what other organizations are providing professional development to nonprofits in London and Middlesex County revealed that there are over 25 organizations involved in this area (see Attachment E for further information). The professional development events offered by these organizations include formal certificate programs in not-for-profit management, networking opportunities, on-line learning opportunities (e-learning), tele-learning (webinars, etc.), half day and full day workshops, etc. A range of topics are covered and, in some instances, specific groups are targeted for the training opportunities.

### **Conclusions:**

There are many other organizations involved in providing professional development to nonprofits in London and Middlesex. Pillar needs to determine its niche market in terms of professional development and consider what role it wants to play in the whole realm of professional development for nonprofits. This should include considering how to better partner with some of the other service providers (for example: receiving a “finder’s fee” or financial incentive for promoting and referring nonprofits to other service providers).

## **Learnings from Other Capacity Building Organizations**

Based on the responses to the question, what are your successes surrounding professional development events, it is apparent that the 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey are seeing success in the provision of professional development events to their target audiences. The responses show a range of successes, from types of events offered to high ratings of evaluations by attendees to increased capacity for organizations attending the events to raising the capacity building organization’s profile in the community (see Attachment B for detailed responses).

The capacity building organizations that responded to the on-line survey deal with similar challenges surrounding professional development events. Some of the common challenges noted by respondents are:

- Keeping the costs of the event reasonable for attendees. This included finding speakers and physical space that was affordable;
- Having the staff resources and capacity to plan for and work on professional development events;
- Finding quality presenters and/or facilitators that have the required expertise and are affordable;

- Being able to meet the varying needs and levels of sophistication of the attendees.

The 16 capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey were asked what were their unique and cutting edge best practices in the area of professional development. The table below highlights some of the responses, by organization.

<b>Name of Organization</b>	<b>Unique and Cutting Edge Practices in Professional Development</b>
<b>The Centre for Non Profit Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preparing leaders for sector of tomorrow, not just skills for now</li> <li>▪ Integrating the series of workshops</li> <li>▪ Building a community of participants</li> </ul>
<b>Employment Sector Council London/Middlesex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regular Common Assessment Process sessions scheduled so that all member agencies use this method consistently across the network. Links staff, ensures best practice in service delivery, puts client at centre of process, ensures appropriate referrals to partner agencies</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer Action Centre of Kitchener Waterloo and Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Testing a certificate program - set of workshops on specific topics</li> <li>▪ Try to vary the topics and the formats to provide opportunities for everybody</li> </ul>
<b>Brant United Way</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Training each of United Way's member agencies individually at their agency location in outcomes measurement with volunteers (12 hour training session)</li> </ul>
<b>Community Development Halton Volunteer Halton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Diversity Breakfast series..... offered quarterly. Topics range from policy development to site visits</li> <li>▪ Annual Education Day .....this day is devoted to future issues affecting the voluntary sector</li> </ul>
<b>Carleton University's Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ One-week intensive graduate level course with seven modules</li> </ul>
<b>London Heritage Council</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First ever City Wide Emergency and Disaster Plan for Museums and Cultural Institutions and Assets in Canada</li> </ul>
<b>United Way of Regina</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peer learning circles -- they are offered for both Executive Directors and Board chairs (separate circles)</li> <li>▪ Host twice per year a joint ED/Chair dialogue that supports organizational development in a different way</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability Network</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moving away from 'drive by' training to multi-year 'deeper' engagements with a limited number of leaders, leaning towards coaching, mentoring and establishing peer networks</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer Centre of Guelph/Wellington</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have begun to provide two workshop series on an annual basis with a certificate provided at end of the series. We have been over subscribed for these sessions. We hope to have a volunteer managers' network result from one of these workshop series</li> </ul>
<b>Volunteer &amp; Information Quinte</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Offer excellent workshops at affordable rates</li> </ul>
<b>Centrepont</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Receives education support from private sponsors (First Calgary Savings, groupSource, Penn West Petroleum Ltd.</li> </ul>



Name of Organization	Unique and Cutting Edge Practices in Professional Development
	<p>And RBC Foundation)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a \$25 cancellation fee for professional development events</li> <li>Offers on-line registration</li> <li>Each workshop lists the target audience, date, location, level, facilitator and investment</li> </ul>
<b>Vantage Point/Volunteer Vancouver</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers on-line registration (sign in required)</li> <li>Has a Board Chair Academy (\$1,500)</li> <li>Has a leadership coaching program in partnership with the International Coaches Federation (10-12 hours of team coaching for \$1,000 with a 50% subsidy available)</li> </ul>

## Conclusions:

The successes and challenges faced by Pillar in the area of professional development events are similar to those faced by other capacity building organizations. Based on the information provided by the capacity building organizations who responded to the on-line survey, a few have begun to implement certificate programs. Pillar may want to review this concept, along with the idea of an Annual Education Day in which future issues and trends are discussed.

Other items like a cancellation fee, on-line registration for events and defining the level of each workshop would be helpful for Pillar to explore.

Pillar can learn from the partnership that Vantage Point has with the International Coaches Federation in terms of developing a coaching/mentoring program.

## E-Learning

Using on-line (e-learning) as one of the mediums for professional development and training appears to be the direction and desire of nonprofits in London and Middlesex. Respondents to the on-line survey noted that they are interested in learning through the use of webinars (46.4%) and on-line courses (40.5%) as formats for professional development.

E-learning is defined as the delivery of a learning, training or education program by electronic means. It can be education via the internet, network or standalone computer. E-learning refers to using electronic applications and processes to learn. These include: web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms and digital collaboration. Content can be delivered via the internet, intranet/extranet, audio or video tape, satellite TV, and CD/DVD. E-learning can be on demand and it overcomes timing, attendance and travel (accessibility) issues. Some of the common forms of e-learning include:

### Webinar/Web Conferencing

A webinar or web conferencing is a seminar, lecture, conference or workshop that is transmitted over the web. A key feature of the webinar is its interactive elements. The presenter and

attendees can give, receive and discuss information. Typically, each participant sits at his/her own computer and is connected to other participants via the internet. This can be either a downloaded application on each of the attendee's computers or a web-based application in which the attendees access the meeting by clicking on a link distributed by e-mail (meeting invitation) to enter the conference. In some cases, the presenter may speak over a standard telephone line, while pointing out information being presented on-screen and the audience can respond over their own telephones.

### **Podcast**

A podcast is a series of digital media files (either audio or video) that are downloaded through web syndication. This is a one way transference of information and does not allow for interaction between the presenter and the audience.

### **Computer-Based Training**

Computer-Based Trainings (CBTs) are self-paced learning activities accessible via a computer or handheld device. CBTs typically present content in a linear fashion, much like reading an on-line book or manual. For this reason they are often used to teach static processes. The term Computer-Based Training is often used interchangeably with Web-Based Training (WBT) with the primary difference being the delivery method. Where CBTs are typically delivered via CD-ROM, WBTs are delivered via the internet using a web browser. Assessing learning in CBT usually comes in the form of multiple choice questions or other assessments that can be easily scored by a computer.

### **Learning 2.0**

The term Learning 2.0 is used to refer to new ways of thinking about e-learning inspired by the emergence of Web 2.0. From an e-Learning 2.0 perspective, conventional e-learning systems were based on instructional packets that were delivered to students using internet technologies. The role of the student consisted in learning from the readings and preparing assignments. Assignments were evaluated by the teacher. In contrast, the new e-learning places increased emphasis on social learning and use of social software such as blogs, wikis, podcasts and virtual worlds such as Second Life.

### **Blended Learning**

Blended learning is e-learning combined with other training methods, including traditional in-person training.

### **Communication Technologies Used in E-Learning**

A number of different communication technologies are used in e-learning. These include:

- Blogs;
- Wikis;
- Discussion Boards;

- E-mail;
- On-line chat sessions; and,
- Virtual classrooms or meetings.

### **Tips for Using E-Learning**

- Ensure that the learning topic is suitable for an e-learning approach (Is the topic suitable for an e-learning approach? Is the training predominantly information or skills based?). E-learning has traditionally been used for information type training;
- The trend is for using shorter modules in bite size chunks of 10 to 15 minutes;
- E-learning is effective when organizations can provide short, specific topic modules that satisfy an urgent learning need.

### **Utilization of E-Learning by Nonprofit Organizations**

The 2006 Nonprofit and Association E-Learning Survey (conducted by Isoph and LearnSomething in the United States) documented some of the utilization trends in e-learning by nonprofits. Some of the findings from this survey include:

- Responses from 2004 to 2006 indicate a general upward trend in e-learning adoption across all nonprofit organizations (current usage grew from 40% to 53%);
- The most popular e-learning format is self-paced learning;
- There is an increase in the percentage of nonprofits using asynchronous activities (can engage in and exchange ideas and information without the dependency of other participants at the same time – blogs, wikis, discussion boards, etc.), live facilitated activities and blended e-learning approaches.

### **New Ideas in E-Learning**

A number of new ideas are emerging in the area of e-learning. These are:

- Investigating the development of a learning portal;
- Opportunity for nonprofits and/or individuals in nonprofits to create personal learning centres/portfolios (where content is reused and remixed according to the person's own needs and interests and can be downloaded like music is downloaded).

## **Conclusions:**

There are many different formats of e-learning that Pillar can explore and lots of opportunity to create meaningful formats of learning for the nonprofit sector in London and Middlesex. There is an opportunity to develop a learning portal for nonprofits (by coordinating with other providers of professional development/training) and to create personal learning centres in which a fee for service could be charged to participants. This is cutting edge work and may garner funding from a foundation to expand this part of the program.

## E-Marketing

E-marketing is marketing over the internet. It is all of the activities an organization conducts through the internet with the purpose of finding, attracting, winning and retaining customers. It is basically marketing using websites, e-mail, wireless media (cell phones, palm pilots) and social media. E-marketing compared to traditional marketing allows an organization to market its services to an ideal demographic, generate brand recognition and measure marketing initiatives much more efficiently.

There are a number of critical factors to ensure that e-marketing is effective for a nonprofit organization. They are:

- An attractive and dynamic website is at the heart of e-marketing;
- Great content for a website drives e-marketing. Effective on-line marketing means changing content frequently so there is always something new;
- Effective e-marketing requires optimizing the website for the search engines;
- Great e-marketing means being personable and transparent. Provide a list of people to contact;
- Collect visitors' e-mail addresses on the organization's website;
- Get other websites to link to your website;
- Use social media.

The common attributes of organizations that have had the most success in on-line marketing include the following:

- Success in driving traffic to their websites by optimizing search engine visibility, offering compelling content, and promoting their site via other media;
- Effective content and mechanisms in place to convert website traffic into registered users, who can then be cultivated into donors;
- Proven ability to build large e-mail files via on-line registration programs, list uploads and viral campaigns;
- Effective e-mail communication through compelling content, segmentation and personalization to sustain interest in their programs; and,
- A high response rate for on-line appeals, generated by having an effective case for supporting their organization, segmenting and personalizing their appeals, and testing elements of each e-mail, such as the subject line, frequency and delivery timing.

### Trends in E-Mail Marketing

Some of the emerging trends in e-mail marketing are:

- **Inbox Zero Tolerance** – People are trying to keep their inboxes under control. This means they are going through their inboxes quickly;
- **More Time on Social Media than E-Mail** - People now spend more time on social networking sites and blogging than they do on e-mail. People like two-way conversation and interactivity. All those “FYI” emails nonprofits send are just plain boring in comparison;

- **E-Newsletters are a Waste of Time** – Newsletters need to be transformed. Supply a steady narrative of actions, feedback and milestones. Share success stories.

### **E-Marketing Suggestions**

Suggestions for how to reach people on-line include:

- Google Adword Grants: [google.com/grants/](http://google.com/grants/)
- YouTube Nonprofit Program: [youtube.com/nonprofits](http://youtube.com/nonprofits)
- Network for Good (partnered with Yahoo!) Charity Badges: [networkforgood.org/pca/PcaLandingPage.aspx](http://networkforgood.org/pca/PcaLandingPage.aspx)
- Facebook Causes: [apps.facebook.com/causes/about](http://apps.facebook.com/causes/about)
- Twitter: [twitter.com](http://twitter.com) Second Life: [secondlife.com](http://secondlife.com)
- Best Practices for Non-profits in Second Life pdf: [holymeatballs.org/pdfs/BestPracticesforNon-profitsinSecondLife\\_012008.pdf](http://holymeatballs.org/pdfs/BestPracticesforNon-profitsinSecondLife_012008.pdf)

Suggestions for how to get other people to promote your organization include:

- Make it easy for them to share your site by making it easy for people to e-mail articles from your site to their friends. Let them bookmark ([www.google.com/bookmarks](http://www.google.com/bookmarks), [bookmarks.yahoo.com/](http://bookmarks.yahoo.com/)) and tag ([del.icio.us](http://del.icio.us), [reddit.com](http://reddit.com), [digg.com](http://digg.com)) the content they find useful;
- Create your own widgets and let supporters add to their blog, page, or website (Gyidget: [gyidget.com/my\\_widget](http://gyidget.com/my_widget), Clearspring [clearspring.com](http://clearspring.com), Widgetbox [widgetbox.com](http://widgetbox.com). And you can submit your widget to Widgipedia [widgipedia.com](http://widgipedia.com) or Gigya [gigya.com](http://gigya.com) or Pageflakes [pageflakes.com](http://pageflakes.com)).

### **Conclusions:**

E-marketing can be an effective tool to market Pillar's Professional Development Program. Some of the items which need to be addressed as part of this discussion include:

- Who are we trying to target for our Professional Development Program?
- How can we reach them?
- Why would this audience want to attend Pillar's professional development events?
- How do people find out about Pillar's Professional Development Program?
- How might potential attendees find information about Pillar's Professional Development Program?
- How effective are Pillar's current e-marketing strategies in regards to the Professional Development Program?
- How will Pillar direct potential clients to information about the Professional Development Program? Target the information towards them (personalize)? How will Pillar increase the chances for potential attendees to find information about Pillar's Professional Development Program?

## Summary and Recommendations

Pillar's Professional Development Program is a solid program which nonprofits appreciate. It has a strong track record of attracting participants and generating net revenue for the organization as a whole. With the shifting trends in the learning formats of professional development and the newly collected information about nonprofits needs in the area of professional development there is an opportunity for Pillar to continue to be a leader in providing professional development to nonprofits in the London and Middlesex area. The following outline the recommendations for Pillar to explore in regards to its Professional Development Program.

### Purpose

1. Establish a clear purpose and objectives for the Professional Development Program.
  - a) This may take the form of a Program Logic Model.
  - b) Identify the niche Pillar serves (the value proposition) for the Professional Development Program. Pillar needs to determine its niche market in terms of professional development and consider what role it wants to play in the whole realm of professional development for nonprofits. This should include considering how to better partner with some of the other service providers (for example: receiving a “finder’s fee” or financial incentive for promoting and referring nonprofits to other service providers).
  - c) Ensure that Pillar continues to be seen as the “organization of choice” for professional development events for nonprofits.

### Program Enhancements

2. Set an annual professional development agenda which includes a number of courses offered each year and includes the flexibility for an organic process to identify emerging topics for the nonprofit sector. Include the topics selected as the top 5 choices for future professional development:
  - Fundraising;
  - Communications and Marketing;
  - Social Media;
  - Grantseeking and Proposal Writing;
  - Strategic Planning.
3. Explore the use of e-learning and technology to expand the Professional Development Program and to be cutting edge in this area. Look at items such as the creation of a Learning Portal, the development of personal learning centres, webinars, on-line courses, wikis, etc. and explore additional funding from foundations and other funders to pilot this cutting edge work.

4. Explore the use of coaching/mentoring as a new learning format to be employed in the Professional Development Program. Look at partnering with local coaches and/or the International Coaches Federation to provide this service.
5. Develop a blended learning program which offers a mix of in-person and e-learning options to nonprofits.
6. Continue to offer a mix of half day and full day workshops, with the focus on half day workshops.
7. Explore developing a continuing series of workshops offered and priced as a package. Conduct further research on interest in topics, demand, price point, potential partnerships and sponsorships.

## **Resources and Revenues**

8. Establish a set differential in rates for members and non-members. As part of this explore having a set rate for half day and a set rate for full day workshops.
9. Explore the establishment of private sector sponsors for the Professional Development Program.
10. Continue to identify and nurture partnerships for the provision of events in the Professional Development Program that are in alignment with the Collaboration Policy Framework.
11. Develop a business case for resources to staff the Professional Development Program.
12. Explore the use of volunteers and other alternative means to assist with registration at large professional development events.

## **Efficiencies**

13. Review and revise the current evaluation tools to include questions such as, “How did you hear about this event? Was the level of information presented adequate? Are there other formats in which you would like to learn more about this topic?” etc.
14. Review administrative efficiencies and items in the program; including: charging a cancellation fee; offering on-line registration for events; and, defining the level of each workshop.
15. Develop tools to assist with the development of the Professional Development Program’s annual budget.
16. Develop tools to monitor the budget and actuals of the Professional Development Program.

## Marketing

17. Look at refining the current marketing strategy for the Professional Development Program to focus on those strategies that are having the most impact, to marketing to the wider, potential market and to increasing the number of non-members attending events.
18. Explore expanding the current reach of the Professional Development Program by marketing to and serving a broader geographic area (for example: Oxford, Elgin, Middlesex and Perth Counties, etc.).
19. Develop an e-marketing strategy for the Professional Development Program. Some of the items which need to be addressed as part of this discussion include:
  - Who are we trying to target for our Professional Development Program?
  - How can we reach them?
  - Why would this audience want to attend Pillar's professional development events?
  - How do people find out about Pillar's Professional Development Program?
  - How might potential attendees find information about Pillar's Professional Development Program?
  - How effective are Pillar's current e-marketing strategies in regards to the Professional Development Program?
  - How will Pillar direct potential clients to information about the Professional Development Program? Target the information towards them (personalize)? How will Pillar increase the chances for potential attendees to find information about Pillar's Professional Development Program?



**Attachment A**

**Attachment B**

**Attachment C**

## Attachment D

### Workshop Evaluation

Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being high and 1 being low.

1. How would you rate the knowledge level of the presenter?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. How would you rate the clarity of the presenter?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. Was the information presented easy to understand?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. How would you rate the entire presentation?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. What did you enjoy most about the presentation?

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6. What suggestions would you make to improve the presentation?

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7. Please provide any suggestions for topics for future events.

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8. If your organization is not currently a member would you like to learn more about becoming a member of Pillar Nonprofit Network?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Already a member

If yes, please provide contact information.

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## **Attachment E**