

**Regional Training- How and Why Not To Do It All
Compilation of Case Study Responses From 4 Workshops
March, 2024**

Case Study: LWV of Somewhere in NYS

Caroline feels a migraine coming on. She loved the idea of being president of her local League but is now having some doubts. It's the middle of her first year in office and her responsibilities seem endless. Next year is an election year, with hotly contested races at the local, state, and national levels – perfect opportunities to engage members to do the League's important work. Only she doesn't know how to get everything done. She knows she should delegate some of her tasks, but no one seems interested or, frankly, qualified to do them properly; it's just faster to do everything herself.

Caroline's board has fallen into a comfortable routine. Though highly experienced, many members, having held their current roles for eons, are pretty apathetic - except when others try to modify or replace their tried-and-true activities and procedures. Board and ad hoc committees are meeting, which is the good news. But, according to reports the committee chairs gave at the last meeting, VS is enthusiastically planning more programs than they can possibly handle.

The League's Treasurer/Secretary and VP are rays of sunshine. Grants have come through for VR and GOTV events, and new membership is picking up due to the intense nature of the upcoming election season. One of the new members is enthusiastic and brimming with great ideas. Unfortunately, she is a working mom with very little spare time.

Caroline has been praised for her listening skills and when called upon, inspiring communication.

She has a year and a half left in her term but is worried her Nominating committee will have a tough job recruiting someone to take her place.

Given that she only has a few months before election season kicks into gear, what steps can Carolyn take to strengthen her League and put an end to her headaches (or at least alleviate some of them)?

- What are her most pressing problems?
- What are her resources?
- How might they be utilized most effectively?

Caroline's Most Pressing Problems:

Carolyn is overwhelmed

She has a hard time prioritizing

There's no succession plan, no way out

Spread too thin by doing it all herself and trying to do too much

Burn Out

Lack of self-knowledge: control freak? no personal boundaries, "I-can-do-it-better;" It's faster to do everything herself

Pressure of election year

Lack of priorities

Failure to communicate - Not communicating with board

Not asking: about previous boards, their members, activities, successes, failures for help

Apathetic board, resistance to change

She's not tapping into the expertise of her Secretary/Treasurer and VP - the "rays of sunshine"

Committees aren't owning their responsibilities

She is not trusting the people to whom she could delegate

Caroline's Resources:

Membership growth, and an enthusiastic new member

Money from grants

Experienced board members and established organizational structure - a Nominating and strong VS Committees

Good communication skills and a good listener

The "Rays of Sunshine" officers - Secretary/Treasurer and VP

Is healthy – except for migraines

Time to turn it around

Strong VS committee

Ability to connect with others at local and state leagues

The community (Chamber of Commerce, other nonprofits, etc.)

How Caroline – AND YOU – Can Use Resources Effectively:

Communicate leadership issues to the board and solicit their ideas – and help

Work with board collaboratively: Set priorities, assign responsibilities, and follow up for

accountability. Discuss different types of management: co-presidents, management team

Brainstorm with board "off premises" - ASK board to pitch in with small discrete tasks

like mentoring new members or calling potential volunteers. Delegate small and specific tasks

for new – and existing – members – with estimates of amount of time required,

Prioritize ideas. Only take on projects/programs if board and volunteers are willing to work on them.

Get to know your membership. Call them up and talk to them to learn about their interests and

abilities. Reach out to members with a communication mix depending on their preference:

personal calls and meetups, phone, email.

To facilitate outreach, create a membership form that asks for 1.) a person's communication

preference (and follow it!) 2.) Interests 3.) Skills, experience and 4.) Amount of time

available.

Evaluate use of Zoom meetings which eviscerate personal touch.

Match up people's skills and personalities with responsibilities; Code membership skills and interest so people looking for volunteers can easily find the right fit for the job by time, interest, and skill.

Create a "Help Wanted" column in your newsletter to get things done and attract new members

Use committees - leaders and members

Have orientation meetings to explain what to do and what not to do

Work on self-knowledge: it's really okay if people don't do as well as you might. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Perfectionism can stand in the way

Reach out to other leagues for assistance and guidance

Collaborate with other leagues and nonpartisan organizations to partner events

Reengage former leaders (elder states-people) as mentors. Take advantage of their expertise.

Get good people on the nominating committee.