

ADMN 232 – Introduction to Management

Assignment 2: Essay

Autism Edmonton

<http://www.autismedmonton.org/>

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		COMMENTS
Organizational Chart	20 / 20	
Departmentalization	20 / 20	
Authority	20 / 20	
Job Design	20 / 20	
Evaluation	10 / 10	
Writing Style	7 / 10	It is important to use APA style for referencing.
	97.00 / 100	

Autism Edmonton provides services and support to people who live with autism spectrum disorder by helping navigate information, provide various services, as well as develop skills and peer support through facilitated activity and discussion groups.¹ They are a small organization, utilizing limited paid staff through “departmentalization”, a method of subdividing work and workers into separate organizational units that take responsibility for completing certain tasks. They use “matrix departmentalization”, a hybrid organizational structure where two types of structuring are used. At the highest levels, they use “functional departmentalization”, organizing staff and work into separate units, such as “Programs and Services” and “Fund Development”. The advantages here are that tasks are accomplished by highly qualified specialists and costs are decreased by reducing duplication. The disadvantages are that cross-department coordination is challenging with staff only doing what is “right” for their own function than what’s best for

¹ From: <http://www.autismedmonton.org/about-us>

the organization. As they grow, it can lead to slower decision-making, producing managers with narrow experience and expertise.

Drilling down into their “Programs and Services” branch, the hierarchy is then organized through a “customer departmentalization” approach, where workers focus on particular demographic groups such as “Adults with Autism 25+” or “Partners of Individuals with Autism”.

Organizational authority is centralized here and determined by the “chain of command”, vertically connecting jobs to managers and clarifying who reports to whom. Management is comprised of a board of directors that delegates authority to the Executive Director, who oversees managers of three branches (Programs and Services, Fund Development, and Volunteer and Community Involvement). Those managers, in turn, supervise two or more people. This “span of control” ensures that few people report to each manager, making it easier to control staff because more time is available to spend with each person. Research suggests that no more than six or seven individuals should report to any one supervisor. It is important within a matrix hierarchy that employees do not have two managers, violating the principle of “unity of command”, which makes the organization difficult to manage if employees receive conflicting directions from two different bosses.

Managers must also exercise their authority directly by completing tasks themselves or delegating full responsibility, meaning that employees must have the same tools and information at their disposal that their managers have. Further, the implications of this organization’s hierarchy on job design is that employees may not find their work interesting or motivating enough. Many broadly-defined jobs exist (i.e. “Autism Support

Specialist” or “Operations Coordinator”), with varying degrees of responsibility and tasks. Here, employees may be empowered to communicate horizontally amongst each other based on task knowledge, collaboration and flexible job design. However, as the term “specialist” is used in the above example, it does not match the reality of what “job specialization” truly means – simple, easy-to-learn steps, low variety, and high repetition. As Autism Edmonton grows and expands their reach, each employee must continue to learn both specialized knowledge (to be a helpful resource to individuals and families), as well as perform other generalist functions. This is a good approach to have because it is in essence a “job enrichment” approach (whereby those limitations in “specialized” jobs are overcome) can increase the number of tasks by giving employees more authority and control to make meaningful decisions in their work. This is not the same as “job enlargement”, where workers can feel stressed because increased tasks and responsibilities are added without additional authority and control, especially if not given extra hours to accomplish their work.

As a decentralized organization, much of the authority is in fact delegated to the workers closest to addressing public requests, and this helps them make decisions without consulting too much with supervisors. Also, because each individual and family is unique, this approach of decentralization leads to faster decisions, greater employee and customer satisfaction, and significantly better financial performance when serving the public.

Employee and volunteer jobs at Autism Edmonton are specialized to the extent that they define precisely what the role and duties are, what must be learned, and another benefit is that they don’t require highly-paid workers (particularly so with volunteers). In a

human services industry where staff and the public rely on sharing of information to accomplish objectives, this makes person-to-person communications and relationship-building essential. Their use of empowerment to improve their organizational process and effectiveness can pass decision-making authority and responsibility from managers to workers by giving them the information and resources they need to make and carry out good decisions.

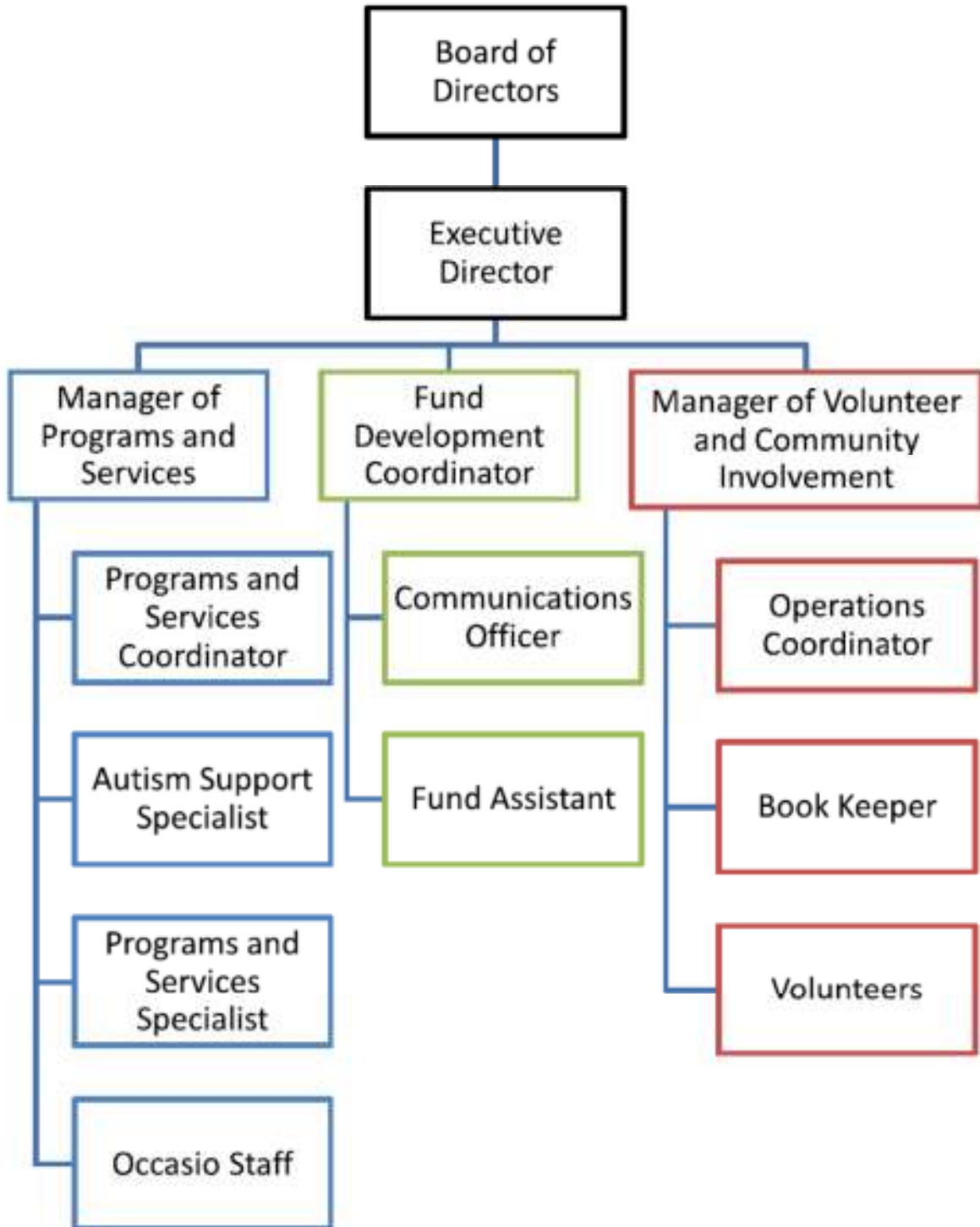
Autism Edmonton has come a long way since 1971. Most recently, they have been “re-branded” and are changing their intra-organizational processes (shown in the attached organizational charts). They are well-organized, evidenced by all the activities taking place within the organization that are transforming many requests for information and services into outputs that their constituents can value. In continuing to provide more to the public, at some time in the near future they should consider adopting a centralized interface where all communications and knowledge is shared, essentially re-engineering the way they serve individuals and families. Through a redesign of business processes into information-technology-managed processes - such as online enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), and partner relationship management (PRM) systems - re-engineering would change their vertical orientation to more of a horizontal orientation. The current work processes may be enhanced by decreasing the amount of “information overload” by organizing tacit knowledge that workers and volunteers possess into a central interface. This would also increase reciprocal interdependence because electronic brainstorming and communication can take place in real time. Asana² is an example of a free collaborative work tool that could

² See: <https://asana.com/>

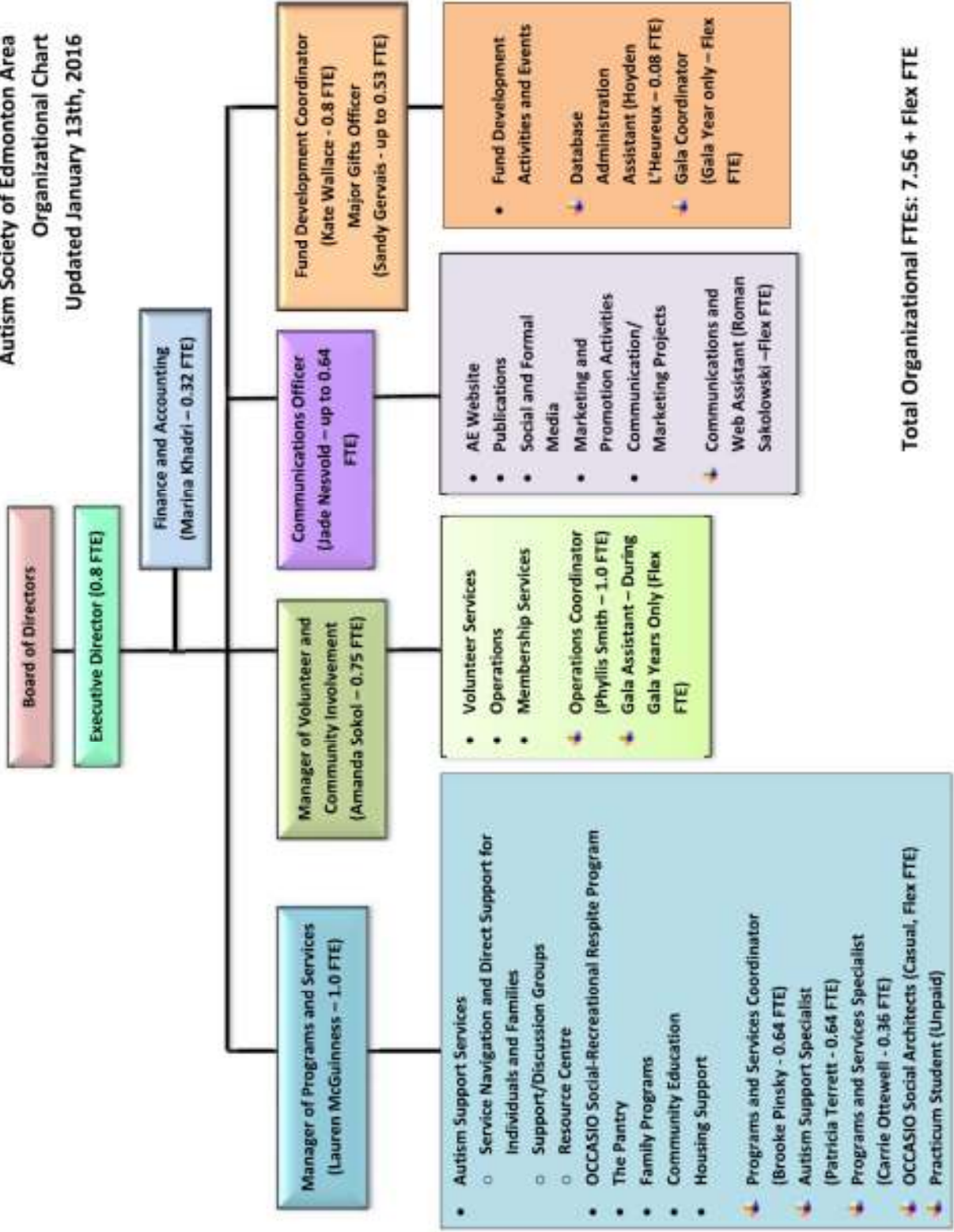
be of benefit here. Using such a tool can dramatically increase productivity and public/stakeholder satisfaction.

Empowering workers to use IT means sharing decision-making authority and responsibility with workers. Empowered workers usually develop feelings of competence and self-determination, believing that their work has meaning and impact. In turn, they can also learn to manage new employees, allow Autism Edmonton to further grow.

Autism Edmonton Organizational Chart



Autism Society of Edmonton Area
Organizational Chart
Updated January 13th, 2016



Total Organizational FTEs: 7.56 + Flex FTE



Programs and Services Department
Organizational Chart

