

NEWSLINE

WSO RESTRUCTURING EXPECTED TO RESULT IN BETTER SERVICE

Company restructuring—the phrase usually evokes images of massive layoffs, dramatically reduced services, and automated everything. But for WSO, we're not restructuring for the usual reasons, so we're not likely to have the usual results. We find we must do some restructuring to maximize very limited resources and be ready to provide service to a rapidly (and unpredictably) changing organization.

Since the 1994 World Service Conference, the WSO has been engaged in a comprehensive effort to improve the services delivered by its staff. One of the primary elements of the overall effort has been a systematic training of all staff members. The training has been intended to raise the general knowledge of the staff about a broader range of WSO responsibilities, while minimizing specialization. In other words, we need to ensure that more employees know how to perform a wider range of tasks to operate with our very limited resources. We no longer can afford the luxury of having staff assigned to an area of responsibility in which they are the sole expert.

As we expected, there has been a higher incidence of error in many of the things that the WSO did for years almost error-free. This is one of the predictable, albeit unfortunate, side-effects of a company-wide broad-based training program. Over the long term, this type of training program will result in better service. We will have at our disposal groups of staff with knowledge of all the tasks and responsibilities involved in a particular area instead of one or two individuals who can perform very specific functions within a limited area. Obviously, we haven't completed this process; however, we are seeing tremendous progress in some areas.

We would like to thank you, the fellowship, for your patience and understanding with our errors in shipping and literature orders, etc. All of the teams at the office are striving for quality improvement in the delivery of services. Our objective is to have more knowledgeable and better trained staff in place before major changes to the service structure are made. We believe that in this way the WSO can be the stable resource the fellowship expects. As one

of our executive co-directors, Anthony Edmondson, put it, "The fellowship hasn't slowed, one bit, in its expectation that the WSO is the place to get information and assistance."

Another change has involved the staff team composition. Several of the teams have been realigned. The Conference Services Team has merged with the Fellowship Services Team. A Technological Support Team has been formed. The Shipping and Accounting Team has been split into two teams: the Asset Management Team and the Production, Distribution, Research and Development Team. Also many cross-team functions have been identified, such as the tasks associated with the world convention, communications, and editorial services.

Again, this has resulted in less specialization, but more staff capable of handling a broader range of responsibilities. We think that this is the best internal structure we can have given the expected changes to world services. With this structure, the office will remain stable throughout the implementation phase of the world services inventory and can provide service to the NA Fellowship and its service structure no matter what changes are implemented.

ABOUT OUR BUSINESS PLAN

Without a vision, no organization can ever reach its full potential. Without clearly stating and describing its vision, an organization won't be able to sustain a focus long

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enough to accomplish much of anything. WSO has been plagued by just this situation for many years. We've attempted a variety of cures for what ails us, some of which have been very effective short-term solutions. However, the only way to bring all of our efforts together and be assured that our unified vision and the means to carry it out will stay on track is to develop a business plan.

While the process of developing a business plan is daunting—a great deal of work is involved—we have made a start. We are pleased to report that we have written mission and philosophy statements for the WSO, Inc. and developed a framework for the remainder of the business plan. We will eventually have a document that provides a sufficient organizational overview to special workers, the WSO board, other trusted servants, and the fellowship as a whole. It will include a historical perspective as well as a current description of the WSO. Because of the nature of our organization, the WSO business plan will not be a fixed and unchanging piece of work. It will instead be fluid, reflecting our consensus-oriented fellowship and the value we place on two-way communication. To that end, the document will include a method by which annual review and revision can take place.

The completed framework has been sent to the World Service Board of Trustees and the WSO Administrative Committee, and we have invited their input. We have also sent copies to the WSO committee chairs and vice chairs. For more information about the WSO business plan, please see the WSO board's section of the *March Conference Report* and the WSO Annual Report.

Customer surveys done, more planned

As part of the work associated with developing the business plan, we conducted a random survey of WSO customers. The results strongly influenced many of our decisions about the business plan. The surveys were so well-received and the information obtained so valuable to us that we plan to conduct customer surveys on a regular basis, most likely annually.

WSO SALES POLICY

MORE STRINGENT ENFORCEMENT PLANNED

The WSO sales policy has provisions about credit orders and payments that we haven't enforced over the past several years. Unfortunately, this has resulted in delays in the time it takes for WSO to receive payments for literature orders. Last year, we began notifying our credit customers of our intent to more strictly enforce our credit policy. This is the last time we will provide such notice. *Effective immediately, we will be strictly enforcing our credit policy.*

Since we have a spiritual mission as well as a business responsibility, we understand that there may be times when special circumstances exist and we are prepared to deal with those exceptions. However, the rule will be strict

enforcement. If you have any questions about what this means, please feel free to contact Tom Rush, the WSO comptroller.

COME VISIT US AT OUR NEW WEB SITE

As we reported in the most recent *Newsline*, we have been in the process of setting up a home page on the World Wide Web of the Internet. We are pleased to announce that, as of 25 January, the primary service center for the NA Fellowship is online. The address (or URL) for the web site is <http://www.wsoinc.com>. We're confident that our home page will meet the needs of our members and others who are looking for information about us.

The opening screen serves as the "entryway," allowing the visitor to choose a portion of the site to visit by selecting one of five "doors." The doors are:

1. Basic Information About Narcotics Anonymous: This contains narrative that explains what NA does, how it does it, who we are, and how to contact us. The worldwide NA phoneline directory is in this section. The trustee bulletin, "What is addiction?" provides a clear picture of our philosophy about recovery.
2. Service Material: This area contains a variety of information for use by our members. It gives visitors the opportunity to download trustee bulletins addressing a variety of issues, Fellowship Intellectual Property Trust bulletins, and other general information about NA. As new bulletins are published and others revised, they will be available in this area. We also plan to publish future issues of the *Conference Report* and *Digest*, and the *WSO Newsline* in this area. We hope that sometime in the future we will be able to add a listing of group and service committees here. It is our hope that this can be an interactive section, allowing members to update their group and service committee information as necessary.
3. Product Information: This area is our "online catalog," albeit without an order form. We are working on making this section interactive sometime in the future so that members can purchase products online.
4. Information of Interest to Professionals: This area provides presentation papers about NA, articles from *NA Update*, and other pertinent information. It is geared primarily toward professionals and agencies in the drug treatment and addiction research fields.
5. Search Engine: We spent some time deciding whether or not we should provide links to other local sites. Due to the linkages of some of those sites, we felt that it would not be appropriate for us to do so, but we still wanted to provide visitors with a means to search the Internet if they did not find the information they were looking for at our web site. Rather than affiliating with a search engine provider, we chose a generic site where all modes of Internet-wide searches can be conducted.

