

NEWSLINE

This issue of the *WSO Newslines* is a special edition, summarizing the *1995 WSO Annual Report*. This year's annual report was somewhat different than reports issued in previous years. While it included all the facts and figures that are traditionally part of any organization's annual report, most of the report was devoted to communicating in a more friendly and accessible way about what we do at the WSO and, most importantly, what that means to you as a member of NA. It has become abundantly clear to us that our reporting hasn't always been effective. The things we really want to tell you have sometimes been lost in a deluge of detail. So this year's annual report and this issue of the *Newslines*, will be more reader-friendly—we hope. We welcome your comments about this special issue.

OUR MISSION

One of the first orders of business for most service organizations is to define its mission. Why does the organization exist? Who does it serve? What are its goals? Why is it important?

Once written, a mission statement becomes the guiding force by which an organization develops its principles and makes its decisions. For instance, a company that manufactured food or medicine might develop a mission statement that included a pledge to safeguard the health of its customers. In the event that one of the company's products *might* be contaminated, the company would be compelled by its mission statement to recall that product—despite financial consequences. Such a decision would reflect the company's commitment to its mission statement.

All of us at WSO—each member of the board of directors and each member of the staff—are dedicated to making the fulfillment of our mission a reality. We will strive to keep this mission in the forefront of our minds as we go about our tasks.

The mission of the World Service Office, Inc., is to provide the services and support that facilitate the continued growth and development of the Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous worldwide.

In support of this mission, the WSO is committed to the following:

- *NA's philosophy and principles as contained in NA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Concepts of Service, and fellowship-approved literature.*
- *Fiscally sound and effective decision making.*
- *Quality management, defined as:*
 - ◊ *a constant effort to strive for improvement;*
 - ◊ *a commitment to remain a reliable, dependable, and stable resource for our customers; and*
 - ◊ *suitable facilities and equipment*
- *Providing an environment of honesty, integrity, mutual trust, and respect.*

OUR BUSINESS PLAN AND GOALS

Writing a mission statement is like deciding on a destination. Having a business plan and a set of goals and objectives in place is like having reliable transportation to your destination. You might get to your destination without reliable transportation, but it's sure to take longer and it will

IN THIS ISSUE:

Our mission.....	1
Our business plan and goals	1
Service delivery: watering NA's roots.....	2
NA Meetings 1983-1995.....	3
A world of recovery needs world-class service	3
Free literature	4
What's all this stuff to read?	4
Production, distribution, and customer service.....	6
WSO financial update	7
World convention update.....	7
World NA calendar.....	8

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probably cost more along the way. With our limited resources, developing a business plan was crucial. In preparing to move forward with our business plan, we researched other not-for-profit organizations and found that some of the problems we are facing—tremendous increases in the cost of raw materials that in turn affect our cost of merchandise, shrinking resources combined with a greater demand for them, and working for and with a volunteer system that changes frequently—are not uniquely ours.

Some of the solutions we have sought, while not uniquely ours either, have put us in the forefront of not-for-profit organizations. We have kept our communications, record-keeping, and other technology current. Our organizational structure is team-based. For the past two years, we have been in the process of a comprehensive training and retooling program. While it's good to know that WSO is on the leading edge of business practices in many ways, it's even better to know that we'll probably stay there through our efforts to develop a business plan and follow a quality assurance program.

Our business plan is based on the principles laid out in our mission statement, and it enumerates various goals and strategies for accomplishing those ends. We consider our business plan a "work in progress," meaning that our goals and plans ought to always reflect what is most essential to our fellowship's growth and development. As our fellowship grows and needs new things, so will new goals be set. The goals we have set so far are:

- Develop and fully implement an office-wide quality-assurance program by 1999.
- Establish and maintain an adequate operating reserve within the next five years. (For now, we are looking at a ninety-day reserve. Also in this area is the need to look at alternative sources of revenue for world services.)
- Establish a set of standards for communication, both internal and external, and set up goals for their accomplishment.
- Research and develop a program for new product development and an effective sales and marketing plan that would benefit both the WSO and the end user.
- Examine periodically, perhaps annually, various policies including pricing structure, sales policy, licensing, and other special agreements.

Reduce the ratio of personnel and cost of merchandise expenses to sales income (total income less discounts) by approximately two percent each within the next five years.

SERVICE DELIVERY: WATERING NA'S ROOTS

The term "grassroots" is used to refer to the foundation or source of an organization. In NA, that's the groups and

local service committees. No matter what is going on in NA as a whole—discussions about changing the steps and traditions or the service structure—the WSO must continue to provide services to the grassroots. Individual members, group service representatives, area service representatives, regional service representatives, convention chairs, committee members, and group secretaries are contacting their World Service Office on a regular basis for answers to their questions. The questions are not always easy, and our replies are not always simple, but we do our very best to answer them all in a courteous and timely manner.

One of the questions we are asked most often is, "Where's the meeting tonight in _____?" Our answer to this question is usually to give the caller the local NA phoneline number. Anyone who has noticed how often meetings start, fold, or move in his or her own area knows why we would be uncomfortable providing specific meeting information. Instead, we maintain an annually updated phoneline directory. We can be reasonably sure that the telephone numbers we provide from the phoneline directory are accurate. On the following page are charts depicting the number of registered meetings in NA from 1983 to 1995.

You also asked us about . . .

It hasn't been any great surprise to us that NA members most often want to know about things that affect them as individuals or their groups. The minutes from, say, the 1982 World Service Conference, are available to any member who wants them, but you seem to call us more often for other things. A sample of those things includes:

- behavior in and around the meeting place
- theft or misuse of NA funds
- violence
- disharmony caused by racial tension
- child care and related issues
- prescription medication
- methadone
- special interest meetings
- banking and taxes
- liability insurance for groups/events
- NA language and our relationship to other twelve-step fellowships
- isolated or incarcerated members and groups
- fellowship interaction with the public

Despite the fact that issues such as these are affecting the most basic levels of our fellowship, the issues themselves are anything but simple. As our fellowship grows in numbers, it also grows in diversity. We have a huge amount of resource material, ranging from WSB bulletins to handbooks to NA fellowship-approved literature, available to help answer your questions.

