



Situation

In 1992, a global NGO with a focus on community development and economic empowerment examined the feasibility of taking some of its international best practices and applying them within the United States. One of these initiatives was called ASSETS (A Service for Self-Employment, Training and Support). The concept behind the ASSETS strategy is that the gulf separating disadvantaged, urban and immigrant communities from economic self-sufficiency can be bridged through a unique focus on developing entrepreneurship skills that result in the creation of viable new enterprises that serve the community and begin to change the economic makeup of urban neighborhoods. ASSETS Lancaster was the first of these domestic ASSETS organizations, established in 1993 to bring economic empowerment through entrepreneurship to the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Strategy

Sometimes organizations need to re-invent themselves in order to remain relevant and sustainable. In the case of ASSETS Lancaster, the agency needed to re-invent its position in the marketplace, but keep its core



strategic consulting

branding & messaging

organizational development

integrated communications

advise

design

engage

deliver

“ I am very pleased with the work of Doug Wendt and his team at Wendt Partners. They were very thorough and efficient, and managed to deliver quality results on time and within budget. Wendt Partners helped ASSETS Lancaster and its board build momentum and develop consensus, while displaying sensitivity to all parties involved. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.”

■ **Shane Zimmerman**
Chair
ASSETS Lancaster

programs intact. The backbone of the ASSETS model is an intensive 20+ session entrepreneurial “boot camp” coupled with mentorship support and other services to help aspiring entrepreneurs launch new enterprises successfully. In addition, ASSETS offers the program in both English and Spanish to maximize its reach and impact. The challenge for the organization is that, from a fundraising and board development perspective, the ASSETS model is very labor-intensive and requires considerable community support and engagement in order to function. ASSETS Lancaster hired Wendt Partners to to them in defining a new development model.

Solution

Wendt Partners performed a series of perception surveys to confidentially assess board member and stakeholder perspectives. Through one-on-one interviews and probing questions, Wendt Partners elicited clear ideas, defined new priorities, and assisted with the exploration of possible directions for the organization. Working directly with the executive director and the board leadership, Wendt Partners presented a decision-making model for the board to use in addressing a variety of complex but critical issues—from operations and staffing, to marketing and program management. As a result, the ASSETS board was empowered with fresh data and new perspectives, which allowed to increase engagement, strengthen support for new directions, and establish a more aggressive development and branding strategy.

Sectors

Business-to-Business, Economic Development, Nonprofit, Workforce Development

Services

Strategic Consulting, Branding & Messaging, Organizational Development

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