

THE NONPROFIT CONGRESS

AS A NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT

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PURPOSE

- Assess attendee involvement in the Nonprofit Congress and attendee perceptions of the Nonprofit Congress of becoming a social movement.
- Surveyed 88 attendees at the 2008 Nonprofit Congress National Meeting
- 22 question survey

THE NONPROFIT CONGRESS

- Initiative of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations
- 2006 National Meeting
 - 500 nonprofit leaders, 47 states
- 3 areas of focus
 - organizational effectiveness
 - advocacy and grassroots community activity
 - public awareness and support of sector
- 117 Town Hall meetings

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

- “group[s] behavior directed in a concerted way at bringing about social change”
- Many studies about social movements, few about nonprofit sector
- Social Movements
 - Bring together people with shared values
 - New forms of collective action
 - Leaderless hierarchies
 - Political in nature
 - Respond quickly to situations
 - In their message

ATTENDEE INVOLVEMENT

- Found out about Nonprofit Congress

Found out about the Nonprofit Congress

Find out about the NC	How Find out (N)
Co-worker	21
Website	16
NCNA	13
Other Organization	6
Listserv	5
State Association	5
2006 National meeting Attendee	4
Friend	4
Other	10
Total	85

- Reasons for Participating in National Meeting

Reasons for Participating in the National Meeting

Reason	Number
Important for the future of the nonprofit sector and coming together collectively.	18
Check it Out	12
Networking reasons	11
Education Workshops	9
Requirement because part of NCNA	8
Advocate	6
Recommended by Colleague	4
Exhibitor	1
Other	8
Did not answer	8
Total	85

*Distinctions between first-time and repeat attendees

ATTENDEE INVOLVEMENT

- Seventy-four percent (61) were attending their first NC national meeting.
- Thirty-eight percent (32) of attendees responded they were involved in the NC activities before registering for the national meeting:
 - 21 attended town hall meetings;
 - 20 organized town hall meetings;
 - 1 attended a nonprofit awareness event;
 - 8 participated in a working group;
 - 16 advocated for change in the sector, and;
 - 7 were involved in the NC in other ways.

CO-WORKER & COLLEAGUE INVOLVEMENT

- 91% told co-workers and colleagues about nonprofit congress
- 46% of coworkers involved in congress

ATTENDEE INVOLVEMENT

- 79% plan to be involved in the future
 - Attend future national meetings
 - Participate in state and local national activities
 - Stay informed in the Nonprofit Congress
 - Don't know

ATTENDEE PERCEPTION

- Characterize the Nonprofit Congress
 - Group of Caring and Concerned Citizens (30%)
 - Professional Association (28%)
 - Advocacy Group (27%)
 - Movement (12%)
- [The NC] brings nonprofits from all over the country together to learn from each other and work together for positive change,”

ATTENDEE PERCEPTION

- “empowering individuals and nonprofits to act collectively for positive change”
 - 83% strongly agreed or agreed with statement
 - The NC brings people together to act collectively (18)
 - It is part of the NC’s mission or goals (11)
 - The NC is creating positive change (10)
 - The statement is accurate (4)

ATTENDEE PERCEPTION

- 18 had misgivings of the nonprofit congress
- “the NC is new, they don’t have a strong or clear message, and it is hard to see the movement.”

ATTENDEE PERCEPTION

- **Part of a Movement**
 - Participating in NC events (10)
 - Town Hall Meetings (8)
 - Conferences (8)
 - Advocacy Efforts (8)
 - Bringing People Together around a Common Issue (7)
 - Consulting or Serving on Boards (6)

RANKINGS/RATINGS

- Being Part of a Movement (Ranked #1)
- Advocating for the sector at large and engage our constituents to solve problems at the grassroots level. (Ranked #2/3)
- Increasing public understanding and support so that nonprofits can continue to do their best work. (Ranked #2/3)
- Ensuring the sector has the resources it needs to serve communities and if effectively and efficiently managed, with an emphasis on effective and strong mission-driven leadership-Sector Resources. (Ranked #4)*Ratings of Importance*

Statement	Average Rating of Importance (1 lowest and 7 highest)
Advocating for the Sector	5.65
Being Part of a Movement	3.51
Increasing Public Understanding	6.51
Ensuring Sector Resources	6.55

IS THE NONPROFIT CONGRESS A NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT?

- Shared Values -- Yes
- New Forms of Collective Action - Yes
- Leaderless Hierarchy - Yes
- Responds Quickly to Situation - No
- Key Messaging - No

RECOMMENDATION

- Nonprofit Congress Create a Marketing and Communications Strategy
 - Leadership Working Group Curriculum Document
 - First-time attendees -- Nonprofit Congress = National Meeting
 - Purpose of Congress during planning for national meeting
 - Stigmatism that comes with the word movement

LIMITATIONS AND SIGNIFICANCE

- Limitations
 - I am involved in the Nonprofit Congress
 - Study only scratches surface of Social Movement Literature
- Significance
 - Other national movements are struggling with communications strategies too
 - Utilize recommendations when planning 2009 national meeting