

7 chapter

Scheduling, Outreach, and Self-Assessment

Introduction

This chapter outlines the remaining issues that the Steering Committee should consider in order to make the CTC operational. The Steering Committee can use this chapter as a resource to help it:

- determine the schedule for operations;
- design a community outreach and marketing strategy; and
- plan for regular self-assessment of the CTC's success and operations.

Scheduling

The CTC operational schedule must be responsive to projected participants' needs, must reflect the focus areas determined by the Steering Committee, and must be realistic in terms of the demands it makes of staff, space, and budget.

User Projections

User projections are the CTC's best guess of how many people are going to use the CTC. The projections will vary by program area and by season, by time of day and by day of the week. For example, will there be fewer people or more people using the CTC during the summer or during holidays? The data gathered and tallied about community interests and needs (see Chapter 2 and Chapter 3) may be useful in estimating how many people are likely to use the CTC.

Look at:

- The immediate neighborhood population, or the total constituency of the agency incorporating the CTC, or a combination.

- The number of neighborhood agencies that are likely to bring classes or groups to the CTC, and the size of those groups.
- The participation levels in any pilot program that has been established.

Realize that in a start-up operation, being unable to serve all those who might want to come to the center provides a powerful argument for expansion.

Constraints

The Steering Committee will, of course, want to establish a schedule that maximizes the number of hours and times of day and week that the center is open, yet it will inevitably be constrained by the following:

- The amount of money it has for operations
- The number of volunteers it can recruit
- Whether the space is secure so that volunteers can manage it independent of paid staff

Scheduling Structure

The proposed schedule must reflect the focus areas determined by the Steering Committee. But equally important, accommodating neighborhood residents' needs means taking their work and living schedules into account.

Age group	Possible Times
Pre-school with parents:	Short morning classes. Morning labs for tots and parents.
School-aged:	Afterschool classes. Afterschool/weekend labs. Special "club" or "project" sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings.
Older teens:	Afterschool/evening classes. Afterschool/evening/weekend labs. Special "club" or "project" sessions on Friday and Saturday evenings.
Adults:	Day and evening classes. Day and evening labs.
Seniors:	Late morning or early afternoon for classes or labs.

Important Considerations:

- It may be advisable to set aside a generally available time such as Saturday mornings for CTC orientation. This would be a time when participants can be introduced to the CTC, when volunteers can be given orientation sessions, and when leaders/teachers of participating neighborhood agencies can receive training in using the center.
- If a focus is job preparation, schedule some classes after school for in-school teens, some classes in the evening for working adults who may nevertheless want to develop job skills, and some classes during the day for unemployed people.
- If a focus is adult education, again, provide both day and evening slots to accommodate those who are and are not employed.
- If public access/lab times are to be included, schedule some for young people only, some for adults only, and some for anyone. Plan for availability during both day and evening times.
- If seniors participate in a local lunch program, consider arranging to have lunch delivered to the CTC one or two days a week and schedule senior activities around the lunch period.
- Do not forget that CTC staff will need both time for preparation and cleaning up, but also time for personal breaks.

Exhibits 7-1, 7-2, and 7-3 are schedules in use by CTCNet affiliates including one from a start-up program (can you guess which it is?).

If the Steering Committee is proposing to open the CTC to neighborhood organizations, their scheduling needs must be taken into account. The CTC schedule can either make certain blocks of time available to outside organizations (such as a day of the week when the CTC would otherwise be closed) or it can solicit the requirements of these organizations and schedule its activities around them. How this is done will generally depend on whether these outside groups provide an important revenue source for the CTC.

Schedules can be changed bi-monthly, or by season (in fact, this is recommended), but once established for a given time period, they should be reliable. If the CTC is to be closed due to an emergency or a holiday, ample notice should be given to participants and to the neighborhood.

Copies of the schedule should be available in the reception area and should be posted in locations where members of the community are likely to see them (supermarket bulletin

boards, laundromats, community centers, other community agencies, and building foyers). A local newspaper might be prevailed upon to publish the schedule of public access hours. If the CTC has a Web page, the schedule can be posted there as well.

Community Outreach

Community outreach or public relations is the process of publicizing the activities and accomplishments of the CTC. These activities are critically important to generating community interest in the CTC and to increasing the visibility of the CTC in the community. Ultimately, a successful public relations campaign will result in a substantial amount of goodwill towards the CTC and continued and increased financial support.

Guiding community outreach and implementing public relations campaigns for the CTC are among the tasks of an outreach coordinator. This person can be an employee, a member of the Steering Committee, a volunteer, or someone hired for specific periods or occasions but should have some experience in media presentation.

What Should the CTC Publicize?

CTC activities and accomplishments

The first year goals of the CTC's marketing strategy should be to:

- introduce itself to the community;
- become a familiar organization in the community;
- broaden its participant base; and,
- generate interest in its activities among the community.

The Steering Committee should be aware that organizing activities of the CTC are its first public relations acts. After organizing is completed, the CTC should try to publicize every activity and accomplishment as widely as possible. The kinds of activities that should be announced to the public include the:

- establishment of the CTC;
- appointment of the Steering Committee;
- hiring of CTC staff;
- grand opening of the CTC;

- schedule, including public access time;
- classes offered;
- foundation and grant awards;
- in-kind contributions from neighborhood institutions;
- accomplishments of the students, such as getting jobs, passing English fluency tests, earning GEDs after attending GED preparation classes at the CTC, or communicating on the Internet; and,
- any electronic commerce activities it undertakes. For example, if the CTC is set up to receive outsourcing contracts, then this fact should be advertised not only in general circulation media but also in specialized publications that may generate new business. Likewise, if the CTC is seeking to provide small business support, then this activity should receive similar marketing treatment.

After the first year, the public relations goals of the CTC should be to maintain its visibility in the community, to further promote itself, and to broaden and continue to stimulate interest in the activities of the CTC within the community. The CTC, therefore, should publicize noteworthy activities and accomplishments.

These should include:

- new program offerings;
- new partnerships;
- the appointment of new Steering Committee members;
- creating CTC web pages on the Internet;
- success stories of participants;
- feature articles on staff and special volunteers;
- a “Year in Review” piece about the CTC;
- any foundation or grant awards;
- special attention the CTC receives from government officials, corporations, the media, or community organizations;
- designing a logo;
- developing a brochure for the CTC; and,
- publishing a monthly newsletter about the CTC.

The CTC's activities and accomplishments will involve most CTC staff members and users. In order to use their names and photographs in articles, press releases, and video footage, the CTC must obtain a general release (Exhibit 7-4). If the CTC operates on a membership basis, a general release can be included in the membership form. Note that having a release in hand does not exempt you from notifying participants of their inclusion in PR materials. Inform them in advance if possible and make copies of any print materials available to them.

Developing an Outreach Plan

After the Steering Committee decides what activities and accomplishments to boast about publicly, the CTC must consider a community outreach strategy. This means:

- **Who should know about these activities and accomplishments in the community?** The list of neighborhood institutions developed during Community Mapping is a good starting point.
- **Why does the CTC want them to know?** For example, the CTC is having a grand opening and wants to encourage community residents to attend.
- **What do they need to know?** Using the above example, the CTC will want to publicize the location, the opening day, whether food and refreshments will be provided, the CTC program areas, the grand opening's sponsor, who to call with questions, and how to become a member.
- **How should they be told?** For example, return to Exhibit 2-2 and for each organization listed, identify the form of communication that is likely to be the most effective way to reach the organization's members or employees. Means of communication can include:
 - informal conversations;
 - addressing community meetings;
 - putting up posters;
 - distributing flyers;
 - letters of invitation;
 - providing copies of the business plan; and,
 - working with the print and broadcast media as discussed in the next section.

An example of the Steering Committee’s conclusions might look like this:

The CTC's Target Audience for Marketing	The Purpose of the CTC's Marketing Efforts	What the CTC Should Publicize	How the CTC Will Market Itself
Other Public housing residents	-To attract participants -To attract volunteers	-Its purpose -Program areas -Hours -Volunteer/staffing needs -How to participate	-Flyers -Meetings -Articles in community newsletter -Radio and TV PSAs
Local churches, synagogues, and mosques	-To attract participants -To attract volunteers -To encourage the donation of funds and equipment	-Its purpose -Its location -How to participate	-Letters to clergy -Have representatives speak at services

How can a CTC Reach its Target Audience?

Managing the CTC’s public relations

Open and regular communication between the CTC Steering Committee, Director and outreach coordinator is crucial to the timely dissemination of information. The outreach coordinator needs to be aware of all CTC activities so that pertinent information is circulated promptly throughout the community. It is unimportant that the outreach coordinator be present at the CTC as long as he or she is networked with the Director and Steering Committee and will know CTC news.

Creating media opportunities

The CTC will want news of its activities to obtain the widest circulation possible within the community and should rely on the community outreach opportunities explored in the previous section. The CTC must identify and contact various types of media in order to get this type of exposure. In addition, the CTC should identify the print and broadcast media available in most communities:

- **Newspapers, including dailies, weeklies, supermarket papers, high school and college papers.** In addition to standard opportunities, the CTC

will want to learn about any special sections, such as community activities sections, special Sunday editions on technology, and “Person of the Week” feature story opportunities.

- **Television stations, including networks with community news and cable stations.** The CTC will want to know if stations offer free airtime for Public Service Announcements (PSAs).
- **Radio stations, including network stations and college stations.** The CTC will want to find out about PSAs, talk shows that would be interested in interviewing the CTC Director or Chairman of the Steering Committee and a community partner, and opportunities for getting on-the-air during a telethon.
- **Publications of the various CTC community partners, including corporate newsletters, school newsletters for staff and administration, and flyers of community-based organizations.** A press release should be written each time CTC partners with a neighborhood institution and this press release should be placed in that neighborhood institution’s newsletter or flyer, if one exists.
- **Community bulletin boards or kiosks.** These would be places to post the schedule and CTC staff openings for both paid and volunteer positions.
- **Trade publications.** The CTC should identify trade newspapers, magazines and other publications (such as journals of higher education and philanthropy) in which to place articles and press releases. The CTC may gain publicity and, perhaps, offers of technical assistance and funds.
- **Magazines.** Find out if a monthly magazine is published in your area.

The opportunities created by a community outreach strategy in the print and broadcast media will afford the CTC the widest possible exposure in the community.

Assessment

The Steering Committee needs to know whether its plans for the CTC are working and what the CTC can do to improve its effectiveness. Establishing procedures to provide this sort of information is called making a “self-assessment” plan or engaging in “formative” or “process” evaluation.

Funders, too, like to know that their grantees are tracking results. Tracking results is called “summative” or “outcome” evaluation. Too often, CTCs put self-assessment and

evaluation on the back burner, only to find later, when an evaluation is required under a particular grant, that procedures have to be imposed on an already functioning operational plan.

The best course is to build strategies for data collection and opportunities for participant feedback into the operational plan for the CTC from the very beginning. Think about instituting some or all of the following:

- Sign-in/sign-out procedures to provide a record of who uses the CTC, how often, and for how long.
- Participant folders to contain journals of computer use, work-in-progress, data disks, and copies of completed projects
- Teacher/instructor logs to include plans for classes together with follow-up notes, anecdotes regarding specific occurrences or specific accomplishments of participants.
- Volunteer logs to describe tasks assigned and accomplished, difficulties encountered, suggestions for change.
- A comments box prominently located to enable participants to make suggestions, requests, and even offer criticism.
- Regularly scheduled meetings that include groups of participants, volunteers, and staff to provide opportunities for direct feedback.
- Appointing a participant representative to the Steering Committee.

Virtually all CTCNet affiliates have procedures in place to record attendance. For smaller centers, a dedicated computer provides a good mechanism. The sign-in program can be tied to a database that can generate weekly or monthly reports. Of course, if the center is large, or if a large group arrives all at once, the computer sign-in can be time-consuming. If the arrivals are in a group and there is a group leader, the leader can enter the information for everyone.

Paper and pencil will do when a dedicated computer is not available. If paper and pencil is it, it is very important to summarize the attendance information daily or at least weekly. Otherwise it becomes too cumbersome to go back through sheets and sheets of paper and the task often remains undone.

A particularly effective and easy technique for collecting attendance data was devised at Playing To Win's Harlem Center. The center operates on a membership basis. Each member answers certain questions that constitute a basic member profile. This information is entered into the membership database. The member is then given a membership

card with a bar code. Each time the member arrives and leaves, s/he passes the card through a barcode reader and the attendance data is automatically collected. The database can then be used to print out periodic reports showing breakdowns of center use by any of the categories in the member profile.

The Somerville Community Computer Center takes a different approach to assessment and evaluation. Its Steering Committee decided to conduct a fairly intensive evaluation, but to do this during one and only one month each year. During May, questionnaires are given to all participants, all volunteers, and all teachers who staff or use the center. The questionnaires (see Exhibits 7-5 and 7-6) provide data for both self-assessment and outcome evaluation.

Note: CTCNet, as part of its obligations under the 1995-2000 grant from the National Science Foundation, is conducting a research and evaluation effort that includes intensive study at four CTC sites together with a quantitative study of all CTCNet affiliate programs.

One of the goals of this research is to provide affiliates with instruments and mechanisms that will assist them in their own research and evaluation. The research team will conduct workshops at the annual CTCNet conference. Handouts from these workshops will be added to the manual in this section.

Documentation

The business plan will include the following information from Chapter 7:

- One or more weekly schedules
- Sample publicity material (flyers, brochures, a sample newsletter)
- Assessment implementation plan

The Future Center @ the Children's Capital Museum - Winter '95

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	
9:00							9:00
9:30							9:30
10:00		Adult Classes	OPEN LAB	Adult Classes	ADULTS ONLY LAB	OPEN LAB	10:00
10:30	10:30						
11:00	11:00						
11:30	11:30						
12:00	12:00						
12:30							12:30
1:00							1:00
1:30							1:30
2:00							2:00
2:30							2:30
3:00		KIDS ONLY LAB	OPEN LAB	Youth Classes	OPEN LAB	OPEN LAB	3:00
3:30	3:30						
4:00	4:00						
4:30	4:30						
5:00	5:00						
5:30							5:30
6:00		Adult classes		Adult Classes			6:00
6:30	6:30						
7:00	7:00						
7:30							7:30
8:00							8:00
8:30							8:30
9:00							9:00

Sample Center Schedule

Exhibit 7-1

Exhibit 7-2: *Sample Center Schedule*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
9:00	Seniors	Seniors	Seniors	Seniors	Seniors	ACT/SAT H.S. proficiency test prep.	9:00
9:30							9:30
10:00	GED Youth	GED Youth	GED Youth	GED Youth	GED Youth		10:00
10:30							10:30
11:00	GED Adults	GED Adults	GED Adults	GED Adults	GED Adults		11:00
11:30							11:30
12:00						OPEN ACCESS	12:00
12:30							12:30
1:00	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement		1:00
1:30							1:30
2:00	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement	Employment Enhancement		2:00
2:30							2:30
3:00	After School Recreation	After School Recreation	After School Recreation	After School Recreation	After School Recreation		3:00
3:30							3:30
4:00							4:00
4:30							4:30
5:00	OPEN ACCESS	Youth Tutorials		Youth Tutorials	OPEN ACCESS		5:00
5:30		5:30					
6:00		6:00					
6:30		6:30					
7:00		7:00					
7:30	7:30						
8:00							8:00
8:30							8:30
9:00						9:00	

PLAYING TO WIN, INC.: The Harlem Community Computing Center SUMMER SESSION 1992

9:00	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	9:00					
9:30	Hamilton Madison Houses 20: 10-13 yrs girls	Police Athletic League 15: 10-12 yrs. old	Police Athletic League 15: 10-12 yrs. old	Metropolitan Community United Methodist Church 20: 8-11 yrs. old	ADULT & TEEN WORKSHOP HOURS		9:30					
10:00							10:00					
10:30		Metropolitan Hospital CAP 15 teens	East Harlem Urban Center 20: 6-12 yrs. old	The Nurturing Collective 12: 6-12 yrs. old	The Nurturing Collective 12: 6-12 yrs. old	ADULT & TEEN WORKSHOP HOURS	10:30					
11:00	East Harlem Urban Ctr. 20: 6-12 yrs. old						11:00					
11:30							11:30					
12:00		Staff Meetings	Children's Aid Society 20: 9 & 10 yrs. old	Hamilton Madison Houses 20: 5-6 yrs. old coed 20: 10-13 yrs. old boys	Greater Brownsville 8-13 yrs. old	OPEN HOURS 12:00-2:00	12:00					
12:30	Barnard S.T.E.P. (through Aug. 3)										12:30	
1:00											1:00	
1:30												1:30
2:00												2:00
2:30		Martin Luther King Towers Day Camp 30: 6-12 yrs. old	Manhattan & Bronx Team Lounge 10: 13-17 yrs. old	The Bridge 12 Adults			2:30					
3:00	OPEN HOURS										3:00	
3:30							3:30					
4:00			MINDBUILDERS 20: 7-13		OPEN HOURS	OPEN HOURS	ADULT & TEEN WORKSHOP HOURS	4:00				
4:30								4:30				
5:00								5:00				
5:30								5:30				
6:00		ADULT & TEEN WORKSHOP HOURS	SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP & ADULT & TEEN WORKSHOP HOURS (to be announced)	ADULT & TEEN WORKSHOP HOURS			6:00					
6:30											6:30	
7:00											7:00	
7:30											7:30	
8:00							8:00					

Exhibit 7-3: Sample Center Schedule

Scheduling, Outreach, and Self-Assessment

Exhibit 7-4:
General Release

I, _____, for valuable consideration, do hereby irrevocably give my consent to _____, to use my name, any photographs of me involved in CTC activities as well as any of my involvement in activities conducted by the CTC at any time for editorial, illustration, promotional, advertising, and other similar purposes in connection with the CTC's publications and other activities.

Applicant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Exhibit 7-6: 1997 SCCC Participant Questionnaire

- 1) How many times in the past 6 months have you used the computers here?
 Once 6-10 times
 2-5 times More than 10 times
- 2) What kinds of software have you used here? (please check all that apply)
 Graphics Spreadsheets
 Database Typing
 Desktop Publishing Word Processing
 Tutorials Educational/Games
 Internet Scanning
 CD-ROMs Other _____
- 3) Is there any software program that we don't have which you feel we should add? What program(s)?
- 4) Which tasks have you used the computers at the SCCC for? (please check all that apply)
 Develop job skills Build resumé
 Get comfortable w/computers Email/surfing web
 Print documents Have fun
 Homework Use educational software
 Learn a specific program Other _____
- 5) If you use the Internet here, what have you used it for? (check all that apply)
 E-mail Job searching
 Homework/Research Chatting
 Fun Political activism
 Practicing English General information
- 6) If we offered a specific class to the public, which one topic would you choose? (please choose only one)
 Intro to Mac Graphics/desktop publishing
 Intro to PC & Windows95 Scanning
 Advanced Mac/PC class Internet for work and fun
 MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) Intro to programming
 Meeting job recruiters Making a web page
- 7) How would you describe the environment at the SCCC? (e.g. noise level, atmosphere, etc.)
- 8) I am Female Male
- 9) My age is:
 under 8 25-35
 8-13 35-45
 13-18 45-60
 18-25 over 60
- 10) My ethnic background is:
 (e.g. African-American, Pacific Islander, Haitian, etc.)

- 11) The level of education I've completed is:
 some elementary school
 some high school
 high school diploma
 2-year degree
 4-year degree
 graduate work
- 12) I do do not have a physical disability.
- 13) My yearly income is:
 Under \$10,000
 \$10,000-\$25,000
 \$25,000-\$45,000
 over \$45,000
- 14) The total number of people I live with and/or support is: _____
- 15) My first language is: _____
- 16) I do do not receive some kind of federal or state assistance.

**Please
Flip Over
To 2nd side!**

*All information you write on this form is completely confidential.
Thanks for taking your time to help us out!*

1997 SCCC Participant Questionnaire

Page 2

17) Do you have access to a computer elsewhere? If so, why do you come to the SCCC?

18) Has learning computers make a difference in your life? If so, please describe how. And if this is your first time using computers, what do you hope to accomplish?

19) Have you found a job as a result of learning computers at the SCCC? If so, please tell us the story!

Is there anything else you'd like us to know? Please be encouraged to comment on any improvements you'd like to see, anything that was particularly helpful or useful to you that you haven't already mentioned. Also, feel free to discuss particular volunteers whom you found especially helpful.

thanks a lot for..

... helping us out!

All information you put down is completely confidential.

**Please put in the Evaluations Box at the SCCC
or mail to SCCC, 167 Holland St., Somerville MA 02144**