

Types of Capacity Building Activities

There are many approaches to providing capacity building services, including:

- Providing access to repositories of information and resources (for example, databases, libraries and web sites)
- Publications
- Trainings (public, customized or on-line)
- Consultation (for example, coaching, facilitating, expert advice and conducting research)
- Coordinating alliances

The following table lists many of the types of common capacity building activities. The following list is by no means complete. However, it does include many of the types of capacity building in nonprofits. Near the end of the phase, Discover and Feedback, when you are generating recommendations to your client, you might be making recommendations that include some or all of the following activities.

Table III:2 – Common Types of Capacity Building Activities

▪ Assessments	▪ Management development
▪ Board development	▪ Marketing (research, promotions)
▪ Business planning	▪ Meeting management
▪ Business development	▪ Mergers
▪ Collaboration planning	▪ Networking opportunities
▪ Conflict resolution	▪ Organizational development
▪ Convening	▪ Peer learning
▪ Earned-income development	▪ Program design
▪ Evaluation	▪ Project management
▪ Facilities planning	▪ Quality management
▪ Financial management	▪ Referrals
▪ Funding	▪ Research
▪ Fundraising	▪ Risk management
▪ Information technology	▪ Staffing (selection, development)
▪ Leadership development	▪ Strategic planning
▪ Legal	▪ Team building

How Clients Choose Types of Capacity Building Activities

Clients often describe projects in terms of the types of capacity building activities in the project, rather than of the overall nature of the project. For example, they might refer to the project as “fundraising” or “strategic planning,” rather than “resource development” or “setting the long-term direction for the organization. Clients often hire consultants based on how closely the consultant’s services match what the client believes the activities should be. For example, they might seek a fundraiser or a strategic planner. Consequently, consultants often list their services in terms of common capacity building activities.

However, there usually is more to how clients select a type of capacity building than merely by matching terms. Many times, clients do not even realize how they chose a particular capacity building service or consultant. Connolly and York (2003) suggest that the type of capacity building activities undertaken by a particular nonprofit depends on certain factors, including:

1. **Organizational resources**
Including time, skills, expertise, money, facilities and equipment
2. **Organizational readiness**
Especially if the nonprofit has the ability to discern real underlying causes of issues
3. **Organizational life cycle**
For example, new nonprofits need help to create, while others focus on efficiency
4. **Access to capacity builders and associated resources and tools**
For example, to trainings, consultants or peer networks