



Corporate Capabilities

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Synthesis at a Glance...

- Founded in 1998
- Woman-Owned Small Disadvantaged Business
- Member of SBA 8(a)Program Since March 2000
- Subcontractor on the NIH CIO-SP II Procurement Vehicle
- Accepts Federal Government Credit Cards

OFFERING INTEGRATED PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, INCLUDING:

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Planning Training & Facilitation
GPRA-Based Planning
Communication Campaign Planning

RESEARCH

Survey Research
Focus Group Research
Program Evaluation

HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS

Social Marketing
Publication & Materials Development
Information Dissemination

- Conference & Logistical Support
- Public Relations
- Clearinghouse Services

Training & Technical Assistance

- Instructional Design & Delivery
- Grant Review
- Peer Monitoring & Grant Tracking

TECHNOLOGY INSERTION

Database Design
INFOSEC -- Information Assurance
On-line Applications
Systems Documentation
Web Site Development

SYNTHESIS SIC CODES

2721/51112 - Periodicals: publishing &/or printing
2731/51113 - Books: publishing &/or printing
2741/51114 - Database & directory publishing
7336/54143 - Commercial art & graphic design
7371/541511 - Computer programming services
7373/541512 - Computer integrated systems
7374/51421 - Computer & data processing services
7375/514191 - Information retrieval services
7376/541513 - Computer facilities management services

7379/541512/541519 - Computer-related services
8732/54172 - Social science research
8732/54191 - Marketing research
8741/56111 - Management services
8742/541611 - Management consulting services
8742/541613 - Marketing consulting services
8743/54182 - Public relations services
8748/541618 - Business consulting services
8999/54169/514199 - Services not elsewhere classified

Why Synthesis?

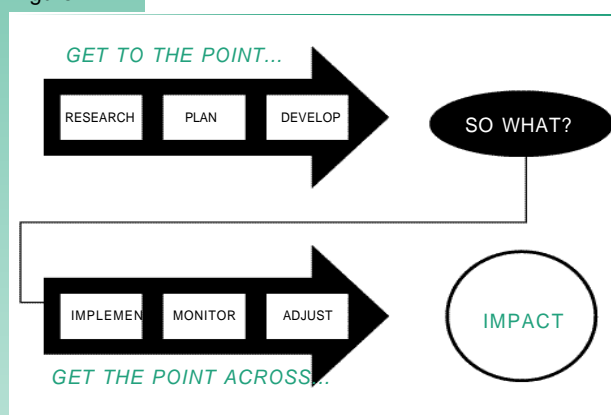
Why Synthesis?

Synthesis partners with clients who seek tangible impact from their initiatives through effective health communication strategies that *Get to the Point & Get the Point Across*. Our vision is to create and implement replicable processes for effective program development. To that end, we take the time up front --as we encourage our clients to do-- to create tools that integrate tested business principles and guide our efforts through key elements of all successful health initiatives:

- Strategic planning
- Research and evaluation
- Health communications
- Technology support

We take the mystery out of using these management tools by creating standardized processes and templates written in clear, concise language. In this way, we outline the steps we take with our clients, eliminate guesswork, and ensure project success.

Figure A



The steps illustrated in [Figure A] seem linear and pretty straightforward. But, in practice, they often form a more circular process [Figure B]. And, depending on project status, it can sometimes be difficult to decide just where to begin.

This can be especially true for ongoing initiatives, when those involved have too much on their plates, or find themselves immersed in long term projects. In these cases, Synthesis staff can offer the fresh perspective clients need to determine clear next steps, stay on track, and work to

achieve objectives efficiently and effectively. So, while we may not always be able to start at the beginning, together we can decide the best way to begin to get the results you need.

With that said, we invite you to take a look at Synthesis' service offerings and decide whether your project may have reached an intersection point where we can help.

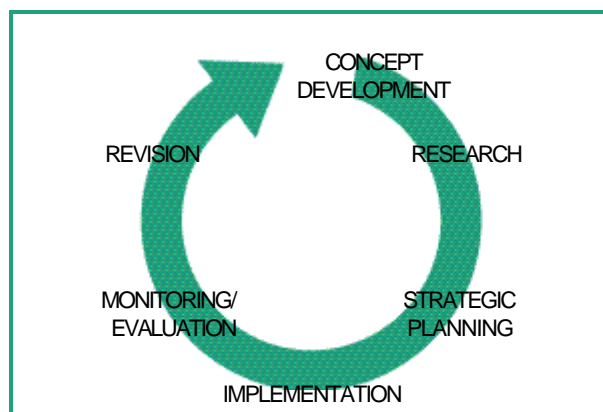


Figure B

Strategic Planning

- GPRA-BASED PLANNING
- HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

Strategic Planning

– A Roadmap to Success

We've all heard it before – “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” But this certain knowledge has not kept many of us from continually postponing this often overwhelming task. Synthesis takes a classic approach to strategic planning and has the experience to guide you through the process successfully.

GPRA-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING

In 1993, Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requiring Federal agencies to develop comprehensive strategic plans, set specific performance goals for program activities, and report annually on actual versus projected performance. Its primary objectives are:

- To create a customer-driven Government
- To assure that Federal investments are linked to defined missions and strategic goals
- To improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Federal programs and spending
- To focus on the relationship between program outputs and outcomes
- To increase managerial accountability for results
- To improve the emphasis on quality and customer satisfaction

GPRA specifies that Federal employees and not contractors undertake this planning process. To assist with this effort, Synthesis offers strategic planning training and facilitation services that help guide our clients through the planning process and develop clear, concise plans that conform to GPRA specifications and acknowledge GAO comments on previous plans from your agency.

At the Department level, GPRA-based strategic plans need to include specific information components. Given this, it seems like an obvious advantage to use these components to guide even preliminary planning efforts at any agency level. GPRA planning components include:

- A comprehensive **mission statement** covering the major functions and operations of the agency
- General **goals and objectives**, including outcome-related goals and objectives, for the major functions and operations of the agency
- A description of **how the goals and objectives are to be achieved**, including a description of the operational processes, skills and technology, and the human, capital, information, and other resources required to meet those goals and objectives
- A description of **how the performance goals included in the plan are related to the general goals and objectives** in the strategic plan
- Identification of those **key factors external to the agency** and beyond its control that could significantly affect the achievement of the general goals and objectives
- Description of the **program evaluations** used in establishing or revising general goals and objectives, with a schedule for future program evaluations.

Strategic Planning

– A Roadmap to Success

HEALTH COMMUNICATIONS PLANNING

The basic components of effective health communications have evolved from social marketing principles. Social marketing is a term used to describe ways to apply traditional marketing methods to the dissemination of socially beneficial ideas. Effective health communications planning integrates techniques developed through traditional business disciplines like marketing, communications theory, consumer behavior, and behavioral psychology.

In terms of health communications, this usually means determining and developing effective ways to raise public awareness about a health issue and encourage people to change their behavior in specific ways to promote better health.

Like any other planning document, a health communications campaign plan can be as simple or complex as the initiative requires. The table of contents for a relatively complex campaign might look something like example below:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Background
4	Problem Definition
4	Goals
5	Objectives
6	Target Market Segmentation
10	Identifying the Needs of Target Segment
10	Segment A
11	Segment B
11	Segment C
12	Consumer Analysis
13	Influence Channel Analysis
13	Communications Strategies and Tactics
13	Product
14	Product Differentiation
14	Price
14	Place/Distribution
14	Promotion
15	Messages to the General Public
16	Messages to Target Groups
16	Segment A
19	Segment B
23	Segment C
26	Other Promotional Efforts
26	Prioritizing Promotional Efforts
27	Program Implementation
29	Evaluation
Appendix I	Action Items for Communications Plan Implementation

Research & Evaluation

- SURVEY RESEARCH
- FOCUS GROUPS & IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS
- PROGRAM EVALUATION

Research & Evaluation

– *Where Are We Now?*

Before we can determine what we need to do or evaluate what we have done to support a project, we need meaningful data that gives us either baseline information or some evidence of the status of our progress along the way. The range of methodologies that can be used to provide meaningful data varies according to the nature of the project and its ultimate goals.

Evaluation measures have become increasingly important as a means to measure and report on performance in response to GPRA, the 1993 Government Performance and Results Act. Our clients count on Synthesis to help determine the appropriate research approach for their projects, and implement methodologies that reflect the level of rigor required to obtain meaningful results.

SURVEY RESEARCH

When gathering quantitative data on any topic, whether the information sought is very specific or more broadly based, sample-based surveys can be an excellent research tool. The “slice in time” data surveys generate can be truly representative of the subject population – but only when suitable controlled sampling procedures are used.

Horror stories about investing enormous amounts of time and money to develop and implement surveys that generate data with so many holes they are rendered useless do not happen at Synthesis. Our associates have strong methodological skills and experience working with clients to design sampling procedures and survey instruments that facilitate the intended analysis and support the ultimate goals of the initiative.

FOCUS GROUPS & IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

When used correctly, qualitative research tools like focus groups and in-depth interviews can measure inter-relationships about people’s knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes and the intensity of their feelings about such things as:

- Policy issues
- Images of organizations, people, or events
- Materials developed to raise awareness or change behavior in some way

These tools are most effective when used to explore very specific issues or solve very specific problems. Because of the small numbers and group dynamics typically associated with focus groups, the data generated is generally not statistically valid or representative of any subject group. However, they can be an excellent source of information for developing a series of questions for use in a subsequent survey or as a means to explore a particular area of interest uncovered through previous survey research.

Research & Evaluation

– *Where Are We Now?*

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Traditionally, program evaluation can be applied at any one of four consecutive levels – formative, process, impact and outcome. Most often, it is a form of action research used to assess the impact or effectiveness of field interventions conducted through some type of service delivery system. The effectiveness of these multi-dimensional studies relies on appropriate choice and use of combinations of qualitative and quantitative research tools. Synthesis associates often use logic models as a pre-evaluation tool for identifying appropriate evaluation design, which may include:

- Experimental methodologies
- Quasi-experimental methodologies
- Case studies
- Non-experimental field studies

Knowing and understanding how and when to use these research tools is critical to determining and implementing the correct approach for evaluating client initiatives. Synthesis clients can rest assured that their research and evaluation projects will be properly designed and implemented and will yield actionable reports with reliable results and clear implications for effective program planning.

Health Communication

- SOCIAL MARKETING & PUBLIC EDUCATION
- MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT
- INFORMATION DISSEMINATION
- TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Health Communication

– *Getting the Point Across*

Health communication is the process by which public health professionals develop health messages and disseminate them to the public. It encompasses a broad range of skills used to support everything from needs assessment through program planning, implementation, and evaluation to coordinating services, developing and distributing resources equitably, and developing sound health policy. Synthesis works with clients using social marketing techniques to develop sound strategies for campaign and message development, media selection, and media advocacy.

SOCIAL MARKETING & PUBLIC EDUCATION

At Synthesis, social marketing means undertaking the appropriate research and planning required to determine how best to implement the “Four P’s” of traditional marketing – **Product**, **Price**, **Place**, and **Promotion**. For social marketing and public education initiatives:

- **Product** typically refers to the messages or set of messages that will be developed to bring about specific behavioral change.
- **Price** generally refers to the social costs associated with making these changes, such as the consumer’s time, effort, change in life-style, delayed gratification or other opportunity costs.
- **Place** may also be thought of as Distribution —how the product/message is accessed by or delivered to the target audience.
- **Promotion** refers to communication. Once a product/message has been developed, tested, and packaged, it will be disseminated to general and/or specific target audiences via mass media and other channels such as publicity, advocacy, lobbying, and conferences and educational programs.

MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

Regardless of whether we’re doing a full public education campaign or a stand-alone brochure or poster, Synthesis uses some level of research-based planning to help our clients choose and develop effective health promotion materials. We can assist in developing materials at any or all points on the continuum between concept development and camera-ready copy, including research, writing, editing, graphic layout and design, and proofreading.

We develop brochures, fact sheets, posters, billboards and dioramas, television, radio, and print PSAs. We write, review, and edit reports, books or monographs. Whether clients need print, electronic, audio, or video communications, we approach each task with a standard communications development process so we can:

- Identify target audiences
- Determine appropriate media
- Determine key objectives
- Isolate key points
- Identify audience needs and attributes
- Identify potential communication barriers and how to circumvent them
- Integrate this information into effective promotional and informational materials

Health Communication

– *Getting the Point Across*

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

Evolving technology is changing the face of information dissemination processes in very significant ways. Traditional conferences may become teleconferences, training can be delivered or supported online, by email or CD-ROM, and electronic brochures and fact sheets are routinely distributed over the Internet.

At Synthesis, we help clients determine when and how to use traditional, technology-based, or hybrid approaches to effective health information dissemination. Whether we're providing public relations, conference and logistical support, or clearinghouse activities, we work with you to develop the most cost-effective, efficient way to get information to your target audiences.

Synthesis provides:

- Traditional Pre-, On Site, & Post-Conference Logistics
- Public Relations Planning, Message Development & Testing
- Help Desk Support, Information Referral, and Inquiry Response
- On-line Information Dissemination

TRAINING & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

As technology resources become available increasingly among program constituents, training and technical assistance initiatives are featuring electronic communications to enhance or replace traditional delivery methods. Through tailored return-on-investment analysis, Synthesis can help clients decide which methods make sense to support cost-effective, efficient education initiatives.

Synthesis uses current adult learning theory to plan, develop, deliver, and evaluate training in formats tailored to specific initiatives. We draw from a range of training delivery methods, enabling us to develop a hybrid format that suits the specific requirements of each initiative. And we don't hesitate to team with multimedia firms or to hire subject matter experts to get client needs met as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

Client requirements may be for general, direct-to-learner training or for the more project-specific or train-the-trainer initiatives that characterize typical technical assistance programs. In every case, we approach each effort with a thorough needs assessment, making no assumptions about the organizational issues and activities that form the backdrop for meeting project objectives. The quality time we spend up front ensures training and technical assistance design and delivery that clearly answers client needs.

Technology Development

- DATABASE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT
- INFOSEC—INFORMATION ASSURANCE
- WEB SITE DESIGN & MAINTENANCE

Technology Development

– *Tools To Manage Your Knowledge Base*

At Synthesis, we look for ways to use available technology to help our clients and ourselves collect, manage, manipulate, and secure information essential to performing their work. In other words, if it makes sense to automated systems - that is, if it's efficient, cost-effective, and if the technology is available, we can use technology to enhance efficiency as we work toward our goals. We approach technology decisions using sound return-on-investment analyses and project-specific requirements. These analyses form the basis for subsequent design, documentation, training, and evaluation of systems that help clients secure, manage and disseminate information and maintain a very valuable organizational asset - their knowledge base.

DATABASE DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT, & MANAGEMENT

The advent of powerful microcomputers and the dramatic increases in network transmission speeds have fundamentally altered how organizations approach database development and management. At Synthesis, we provide cost effective and adaptable solutions that meet the contemporary demand for reliable data management. We not only develop databases to support large research and evaluation efforts that need the power of programs like SQL or Oracle. We also develop smaller applications using Microsoft Access or dBase to support conferences, grants management, and a host of other activities where captured data can be transferred into useful information.

Our Experience Includes:

- Cost-Benefit Analysis
- Normalizing Database Design
- Ensure Data Integrity
- Developing Data Entry Screens
- Design Testing
- Normalizing Data
- Developing Integrated Data Tables
- Data Verification and Validation Procedures

We Ensure Integrity and Consistency of Report Pages:

- Are forms consistent with the Style Guide?
- Do the forms operate as intended?
- Do the forms fit the monitor screen?
- Is the animation speed adequate and appropriate to the application?

We Understand Visual Presentation Attributes such as:

- Using fonts and colors that are visually appealing and easy to read.
- Minimizing eye strain.
- Consistently applying color, design, look, and feel of forms/screens.
- Semantically matching art and text.

Technology Development

– *Tools to Manage Your Knowledge Base*

We Utilize:

- Built-In/On-Line Help Features (Tips and Tool Tips)
- Help for fields
- Use of hotkeys and tool tips integrated within specific applications

System Security Features

We mitigate the risk of exposing confidential information through effective information assurance procedures. Through careful planning, we design systems that allow user clearance only as appropriate, curtailing the ability of users cleared to work in a specified area of the database to log in and browse at will through the system. Similarly, data entered are also restricted by both user and function, limiting user actions as appropriate to the application. For example, we might use "Views" and Stored Procedures on a MS SQL server to:

- Prohibit direct table access
- Limit data manipulation and management to server processes as opposed to client application processes

With regard to web-enabled databases, we ensure data protection from two common external threats:

Direct Attack - We lock-down databases using Server innate security for user accounts and passwords and choose appropriately cryptic passwords for all Server interface user accounts. We also conceal the digital/electronic location of the Server to avoid malicious attacks.

Packet Sniffing - We encrypt data for "on the fly" status during TCP/IP transmission to prevent those armed with a packet-sniffer (a tool designed to grab information imbedded in network protocols) from attempting any network communication.

INFOSEC –INFORMATION ASSURANCE SERVICES

Synthesis security engineers offer the unique experience of having worked with the leaders in Information Security and Cyber Warfare including:

- The Center for Advanced Technology, Information Assurance Testbed
- The Defense Advance Research Project Agency
- The Defense Information Systems Agency
- Global Command and Control Systems

Addressing security concerns is a highly complex problem and no one tool meets all client needs. Our engineers have extensive experience using a broad range of security products in different operational environments.

Technology Development

– *Tools to Manage Your Knowledge Base*

PENETRATION TESTING & EVALUATION:

Synthesis can perform an intrusion detection audit of your current network security design and systems. We use automated tools to determine potential trouble spots, and generate a detailed report with results and recommendations for next steps.

Audits are performed at two levels:

- **First Level - Survey:** Check IP ports for listening processes, attempt to map the internal network, search for weakly configured mail hosts, look for holes in information servers, identify candidates for denial of service attacks, and identify network back-door access. We use a combination of approaches, including automated probing and hands-on investigation.
- **Second Level - Penetration Testing:** We attempt active penetration of the network by planting false domain information, by forcing routes, by impersonating hosts, and by exploiting holes within servers. We also test vulnerability to denial of service attacks when appropriate.

SECURITY NETWORK DESIGN:

Synthesis can design IT systems from the ground up, or improve the performance, security, and availability of current systems. From future requirements planning, to detailed design, implementation, and integration testing, Synthesis can identify cost-effective ways to integrate information protection processes while avoiding the hardware/software conflicts that often complicate integration.

SECURITY IMPACT ANALYSIS:

Security Impact Analysis measures the relationship between the value of your information assets and the cost of protecting them. It involves determining the value and costs, including operational inefficiencies, and deciding what is appropriate for your organization.

ENTERPRISE NETWORK SECURITY ASSESSMENT:

Synthesis can conduct network security assessments using a structured, yet flexible process that evaluates the security posture of a network in the context of the current threat environment. Synthesis engineers can work with the customer to determine the security solutions that best fit that customer's specific requirements.

Technology Development

– *Tools to Manage Your Knowledge Base*

WEB SITE DESIGN & MAINTENANCE

Synthesis web site designers can create a fully functional web site that is:

- Easy to navigate
- Visually appealing
- Quick loading

We work with clients to develop an effective site hierarchy using flow charts to illustrate site structure and navigation paths.

Synthesis copywriters are experts at organizing information to fit the unique non-linear structure of a web site, enabling viewers to navigate your site with ease. And, depending on how often your information needs to be updated, we can maintain your site through daily, weekly, or monthly updates, using file transfer protocol (ftp) to upload new copy and information to your host.

Synthesis Facilities

Synthesis corporate offices are located directly off Parklawn Drive, in Rockville, Maryland. As we routinely do with client requirements, Synthesis has used a forward-thinking approach in designing our facilities and systems architecture. We have incorporated the ability to quickly add work and production areas; phone systems; PC workstations; database, file, and web servers; and short- and long-term secure file management storage, within a 24-hour window. This approach gives Synthesis the flexibility to expand our operations without the excessive cost and indirect rate fluctuations usually associated with growth.

Synthesis understands and incorporates evolving technology into our approach to meeting client and internal requirements. Our Local and Wide Area Networks have been developed to support up to 2500 users in multiple locations with the simple addition of a server. We host several dedicated web, database, and listserv servers for current clients. For clients that do not require a dedicated server for their requirements, but still need a web site with or without database support, Synthesis offers with space on one of our shared servers. Synthesis can easily add dedicated or shared server support and setup within 24 hours.

Our internal wiring is auto switching Gigabit Ethernet (10/100/1000BaseT), coupled with a dedicated full T-1 line for Internet-based traffic. Synthesis off-site staff are provided with a minimum 608/128 ADSL Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection. For web and database hosting services, Synthesis uses a dedicated full T-1 line coupled with 3 separate IP Address Segments. Both internal and client Internet-based traffic is protected by a mix of hardware and software Firewalls.

Synthesis' mix of servers and workstations include:

- Apple Workstations
- Linux Server
- MS Exchange 2000 Server
- MS SQL 2000 Server
- Novell NetWare and GroupWise
- Windows 2000 Server and Workstations

Synthesis' software library also includes analytic, word processing, database, spreadsheet, presentation development, graphic design, and publishing programs including:

- Adobe Acrobat Writer, GoLive, Illustrator, and Photoshop
- CD and DVD Development and Recording Software
- Corel WordPerfect Office Suite
- Macromedia Dreamweaver, Fireworks, and Flash
- Microsoft Office, FrontPage, Internet Explorer, Outlook (email), Project, and Visio
- Netscape
- QuarkXPress
- SAS, SPSS

We continue to expand our software library as newer and more powerful applications become available.

Project Summaries

Partnering with Clients For Success

Client:

Academy for Health Services Research and Health Policy

National Health Care Purchasing Institute
of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Project: Create Communications Campaign Plan
Project Manager: Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance: September 2000 - January 2001
Client Reference: Kevin Piper/202.292.6700

Critical Issue:

The National Health Care Purchasing Institute (NHCPI) is an initiative of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to help public sector and leading private sector organizations improve health care delivery through results-driven purchasing. Through this initiative, the Institute seeks to raise its visibility and generate greater awareness of its resources to assist organizations as a vital source of current health care purchasing information.

Requirements:

NHCPI needs to develop a comprehensive communications campaign plan to:

- Determine and implement ways to promote the Institute among its target audiences
- Draw attention to successful implementation of health care purchasing innovations among leading corporations.
- Submit to The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation as the basis for a year-long national media campaign

Results:

Synthesis is providing the following services to support this initiative:

- Review available background information about the Institute, its initiatives, partners, target audiences, and any previous media campaign experience that will inform the upcoming campaign
- Meet with Institute staff to discuss plan elements and relevant issues
- Integrate this information into an actionable year-long communications plan

Client:

Academy for Health Services Research and Health Policy

National Health Care Purchasing Institute
of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Project: Write Op-Eds
Project Manager: Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance: September 2000 - January 2001
Client Reference: Kevin Piper/202.292.6700

Critical Issue:

The National Health Care Purchasing Institute (NHCPI) is an initiative of The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to help public sector and leading private sector organizations improve health care delivery through results-driven purchasing. Through this initiative the NHCPI seeks to educate a broad general audience and influence policymakers about selected health care purchasing issues and the Institute's perspective on these issues using op-ed pieces for national and regional distribution to newspapers and other relevant trade publications.

Requirements:

- NHCPI wants to develop up to 10 Op-Eds on health care purchasing issues to disseminate nationally

Results:

Synthesis provides the following services to support this initiative:

- Review background information on health care purchasing issues identified by NHCPI
- Meet with NHCPI Director and staff to discuss key points and gain a solid understanding of the nuance to be conveyed through each Op-Ed
- Develop a draft Op-Ed based on the background information and substantive discussion
- Integrate NHCPI staff comments into a final Op-Ed for national dissemination

Client:

Administration for Children and Families Office of Community Service

Project: Web-based Data Collection, Workshop Registration & Site Maintenance
Project Director: John Houston
Period of Performance: November 2001 - September 2002
Client Reference: Dr. John Tabori/301.277.1801

Critical Issue:

The mission of the Administration for Children and Families' (ACF) Office of Community Services (OCS) is to work in partnership with states, communities, and other agencies to provide a range of human and economic development services and activities which ameliorate the causes and characteristics of poverty and otherwise assist persons in need. The aim of these services and activities is to increase the capacity of individuals and families to become self-sufficient, to revitalize communities, and to build the stability and capacity of children, youth, and families so that they become able to create their own opportunities.

Requirements:

- The OCS sought to collect program data from grantees throughout the U.S. using the Internet.
- The OCS wanted grantees and other interested parties to be able to register online for a series of workshops to be held throughout the country.
- The OCS needed contractor support to maintain its current web site.

Result:

Under a subcontract to OCS technical assistance contractor, PeopleWorks, Inc. (PWI), Synthesis staff:

- Created a home page for PWI to be used to collect grantee data
- Translated an existing data collection instrument created in Microsoft Excel into HTML and posted it on the PWI site
- Are developing a workshop registration database that will be posted as a link to the PWI home page within one month of project start-up
- Are maintaining the OCS web site

Synthesis was able to create the PWI home page, translate the Excel data collection instrument into HTML, and post the instrument on the site within the remarkable turnaround time of one week. As a result of our efforts on this initial phase of the project, PWI has asked Synthesis to continue working with them to expand their home page into a full corporate web site.

Client:

Department of Transportation (DOT) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Project: Evaluation of Older Driver Assessment & Rehabilitation Programs
Project Manager: Gary Golembiewski
Period of Performance: August 2001 - October 2002
Client Reference: Essie Wagner/202.366.1361

Critical Issue:

The rapid growth of America's older population has triggered efforts by DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to focus on older driver traffic safety. During the period from 2010 to 2020, the population of Americans aged 65 and over is expected to grow by 35.1 percent. One response to this trend has been the establishment of assessment and rehabilitation programs for older drivers throughout the country. These programs, which are founded and developed by a range of sponsors, each with their own agenda, vary widely in their scope and approach. The effectiveness of these existing programs remains unclear. NHTSA, as a funding agency for many of these programs, seeks to better understand factors that relate to the effectiveness of these programs and whether they adequately address stated NHTSA goals of safety and mobility.

Requirements:

- NHTSA seeks to conduct an administrative evaluation to generate programmatic information about existing older driver assessment and rehabilitation programs.
- NHTSA wants to determine whether existing programs are successful, and, if so, to determine answers to the following questions:
 - What makes such programs successful?
 - What outcomes are typical of a successful program?
 - What tangible behavior changes can be seen as a result of a successful program?
 - What key elements help ensure success in new programs?
 - What costs are associated with running a program?
 - What resources are necessary for a program to survive over time without NHTSA funding?

Results:

Synthesis provides the following services to support this initiative:

- Identifying 9 programs throughout the US that have been in operation for more than 5 years
- Working with the Project Officer to develop sound, appropriate evaluation criteria for the study, develop protocols, conduct site visits, and analyze the data generated according to the criteria developed
- Using logic models as an evaluation tool to determine program goals, services offered, and expected short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes
- Using hierarchical linear modeling as an analytic tool to cluster programs by administrative structure, scope, and other factors, allowing us to create several levels of data for analysis in order to:
 - Tease out true relationships among study factors
 - Control for problems with variance that occur when using standard multivariate regression techniques in non-experimental settings
 - Create greater precision and accuracy of results
- Preparing a technical report and series of presentations outlining our approach to the study, describing methodologies used, and explaining study results and our recommendations for future research efforts

Client:

Food & Drug Administration Center for Drug Evaluation & Research Office of Training & Communications

Project:	Develop and Implement Community-Based Mental Health Public Education Campaign
Project Director:	Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance:	July 1999-June 2000
Client Reference:	Mary Gardiner-Jones/202.265.6363

Critical Issue:

The Mental Health Association of the District of Columbia (MHA-DC) was awarded a contract with the DC Commission on Mental Health Services to develop and implement a mental health public awareness campaign targeting DC residents to generate awareness of mental illness as a brain disorder and encourage early intervention.

Requirements:

Due to staffing constraints, MHA-DC needed a contractor to:

- Conduct related research,
- Develop the campaign plan,
- Design campaign materials, and
- Make recommendations for campaign implementation

Result:

Synthesis responded to MHA-DC's requirements by:

- Conducting secondary research on general perceptions about mental illness
- Developing a comprehensive campaign plan
- Creating an integrated set of campaign materials including
- Brochures, posters, and electronic fact sheets in English and Spanish
- Dioramas and bus cards in English
- Audio and video public service announcements featuring Virginia Williams, mother of DC mayor Anthony Williams
- Identifying and hiring interns to help implement the campaign
- Coordinating a press conference at the National Press Club featuring the Chief of Staff to the Surgeon General of the United States and a number of highly visible DC residents representing the consumer, provider, and interfaith communities
- Writing press releases, letters to local editors, and articles about the campaign
- Overseeing development of database response tracking system

As a direct result of the work done and the materials developed by Synthesis during this campaign, MHA-DC was awarded a grant from the National Institute on Mental Health to become an outreach partner, helping to disseminate state of the science research on mental health throughout the DC community. MHA-DC has applied for a United Way grant to support continued, more targeted, work on this campaign. When the grant is awarded, Synthesis will continue to take the lead on MHA-DC's mental health campaign.

Client:

Food & Drug Administration Center for Drug Evaluation & Research Office of Training & Communications

Project: Develop National Communications Plan for Online Drug Sales
Project Director: Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance: July-August 1999
Client Reference: Ellen Shapiro/301.827.1667

Critical Issue:

There is a great deal of concern about the potential for harm to consumers related to buying medical treatments and products online from illicit vendors or without their doctor's knowledge. As the lead agency of an interagency task force convened to address these issues, FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation (CDER) has taken an active role in making consumers aware of these risks.

Requirements:

- CDER's Office of Training and Communications needed to develop a national public education campaign to alert consumers to the risks involved in buying prescription drugs online.
- CDER needed to integrate comments from the July 22, 1999 meeting of The Consumer Education Subgroup of the Interagency Working Group for Online Sales of Medical Treatments and Products into a comprehensive communications plan.
- CDER needed to develop campaign messages that reflected the medical, financial, and legal concerns of the agencies involved, which included representatives from the Department of Justice, the Drug Enforcement Agency, the Federal Trade Commission, the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the US Customs Service, and other interested agencies.

Result:

- Synthesis President, Ruth Anne Gigliotti, attended The Consumer Education Subgroup Meeting, participating in discussions that generated concerns from the perspectives of the various Federal agencies.
- Synthesis was provided with comments from four discussion groups, each comprising 12-14 representatives from different Federal agencies. From this information, we developed a comprehensive national campaign plan, integrating concerns expressed by the various agencies.
- We developed messages in concise, clear, simple language that combined the medical, financial, and legal concerns of the agencies represented.

Based on this effort, CDER subsequently asked Synthesis to create a brochure to alert consumers to the medical, financial, and legal risks related to Buying Prescription Drugs Online.

Client:

Food & Drug Administration

Center for Drug Evaluation & Research

Office of Training & Communications

Project: Develop National Communications Plan for Non-CFC Metered-Dose Inhalers
Project Director: Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance: July-August 1999
Client Reference: Ellen Shapiro/301.827.1667

Critical Issue

The Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER) is committed to informing the public, particularly consumers, about the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) role in ensuring that no metered-dose inhalers (MDIs) with chlorofluorocarbon (CFC) propellants will be removed from the market until sufficient non-CFC alternatives are available to treat asthma and COPD.

Requirements

- CDER was asked to develop and execute a multi-media educational campaign that includes tailored materials developed for specific target audiences to promote overall awareness and understanding of the process for replacing CFC MDIs with non-CFC inhalers.
- CDER also needed to orchestrate partnerships with key constituent audiences, including national organizations, consumer groups, and industry representatives, to broaden the reach of campaign messages through their members and local affiliates who have direct access to consumers.

Result

- Synthesis met with FDA staff involved in the Non-CFC Inhaler Initiative to develop a sound understanding of the somewhat complex issues and sensitivities that characterize this campaign.
- We gathered additional information from recommended sources to broaden and clarify our understanding of these issues and desired results.
- Based on this information, Synthesis developed a preliminary national public education campaign plan to inform consumers about the process for replacing CFC MDIs with non-CFC inhalers and reassure them that their current medications would not be removed from the market before sufficient non-CFC alternatives are available to treat asthma and COPD.

Synthesis continues to work with CDER on campaign planning and materials development and will begin work on a preliminary national public education campaign on risk management in the near future.

Client:

Health Care Financing Administration Office of Professional Relations

Project: Train Staff & Facilitate Strategic Planning
Project Manager: Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance: July – October 2000
Client Reference: David Clark/410.786.6843

Critical Issue:

The Office of Professional Relations (OPR) within HCFA's Center for Health Plans and Providers (CHPP) is charged with meeting the liaison needs of HCFA's national professional and provider partners and providing technical assistance and support for FACA-compliant information exchange. A number of different groups within HCFA as well as peer review organizations, fiscal intermediaries, and carriers concurrently conduct these professional relations efforts. Strategic planning was needed to assure well-coordinated communications and facilitate progress toward shared goals among this decentralized organizational structure.

Requirements:

- OPR sought to involve representatives of HCFA professional relations components who routinely disseminate provider information in a strategic planning process.
- As a group, these HCFA professional relations components needed to:
 - Examine the current status of their efforts,
 - Weigh the impact of environmental factors on their initiatives, and
 - Develop goals and objectives that flow from the major functions and operations in their joint mission.

Results:

Synthesis responded to OPR strategic planning needs by:

- Preparing training materials using GPRA-based strategic planning components tailored to OPR issues
- Conducting a daylong strategic planning training and facilitation session with representatives from HCFA regional offices, the Center for Beneficiary Services, and the OPR
- Creating a preliminary strategic planning document, A HCFA Public Relations Function, that integrates the results of planning session discussions

Based on this work, Synthesis has been asked to conduct follow-up work with OPR to continue their strategic planning efforts based on how this preliminary plan has evolved in the current fiscal year.

Client:

Health Resources & Services Administration

Bureau of Primary Health Care

Community Access Program

Project: Logistic Services for the Grantee Meeting
Project Director: Wendy Houston
Period of Performance: September - November 2000
Client Reference: Nora Lynn Buluran (301) 443-0536

Critical Issue:

The mission of HRSA's Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) is to increase access to comprehensive primary and preventive health care and to improve the health status of underserved and vulnerable populations. BPHC's Community Access Program (CAP) is a new national initiative designed to support development of integrated information systems among grantee community coalitions that are critical to building and sustaining health care systems for poor and vulnerable populations. In order to support this important objective, the CAP brings grantees together to disseminate program information, share success stories and lessons learned, and work to develop effective models of clinical care.

Requirements:

- CAP wanted to convene a grantee meeting for approximately 150 participants over 4 days in the Washington DC area.
- CAP required logistical support to select a meeting site, make hotel arrangements, verify attendance of participants, speakers and consultants, copy and distribute pre-meeting materials, and provide on-site support at the meeting.

Results:

To support these requirements, Synthesis is providing the following services:

- Developing a comprehensive relational database in Microsoft Access for tracking participant information and registration status
- Handling all related logistical support tasks
- Providing these services with fewer than 45 days turnaround time

Based on our performance during this conference, CAP asked Synthesis to provide a full range of technical assistance support on a long term basis, including health communications, technology insertion consulting, meeting support and other professional services.

Client:

Health Resources & Services Administration

Bureau of Primary Health Care

Community Access Program

Project: Technical Support Services for the Community Access Program
Project Director: Wendy Houston
Period of Performance: March 2001 - February 2004
Client Reference: Nora Lynn Buluran (301) 443-0536

Critical Issue:

The mission of HRSA's Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC) is to increase access to comprehensive primary and preventive health care and to improve the health status of underserved and vulnerable populations. BPHC's Community Access Program (CAP) is a new national initiative designed to support development of integrated information systems among grantee community coalitions that are critical to building and sustaining health care systems for poor and vulnerable populations. In order to support this important objective, CAP brings grantees together to disseminate program information, share success stories and lessons learned, and work to develop effective models of clinical care.

Requirements:

- CAP wants to develop a compendium of 136 grantees that provides distilled information about each grantee's background, primary focus, goals, and achievements under the CAP program.
- CAP grantees need easily accessed forums for information sharing on topics that are critical to their organizational and target audience needs.
- CAP requires development of a web-based interactive community forum that enables grantees to continue to communicate and share their knowledge base.
- CAP needs to convene annual grantee meetings for 150-900 participants over 4 days in the Washington DC area.

Results:

To support these requirements, Synthesis is providing the following services:

- Conceptualizing, researching, and developing a comprehensive compendium of 136 CAP grantees, including grantee summaries, a matrix that provides at-a-glance information about grantee services, and an introduction that gives an overview of CAP grantees
- Participating in grantee technical assistance calls on a wide variety of topics, including management information systems, disease management, pharmacy issues, oral health, integration of primary and mental health care, HIPAA privacy considerations, media relations, and organizational engineering, and developing paper-based and electronic call summaries for dissemination to grantees
- Writing a monthly newsletter, CAPStone, for dissemination to CAP grantees
- Developing a database-driven, web-based, interactive community forum accessible by conference participants, enabling continued communication and information exchange
- Developing a comprehensive relational database in Microsoft Access for tracking participant information and registration status
- Handling all related logistical support tasks

Client:

Health Resources & Services Administration Division of Quality Assurance

Project: Develop National Communications Plan
Project Director: Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance: January - March 1999
Client Reference: Dr. Susan Goodman/301.443.9928

Critical Issue:

HRSA's Division of Quality Assurance (DQA) works to promote health care quality assurance and protect the American public by tracking information on malpractice and fraud and abuse by health professionals.

One critical activity that supports these goals is the operation and management of two national data banks:

- The National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB), an established national tracking system focused on improving the quality of health care managed solely by DQA, and
- The Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (HIPDB), a new data bank focused on tracking incidents of health care fraud and abuse throughout the U.S.

In order to assume a higher profile among the general public, health care entities and research communities in general, as well as to generate additional queries and fees specifically for the data banks, the DQA needed to generate greater awareness about how these data banks help protect the American public from malpractice, fraud, and abuse.

Requirements:

DQA needed a formal communications plan to outline key next steps for generating greater awareness about:

- The existence of the data banks
- The need for tracking and using these data
- The type, quality and usefulness of these data
- The impact of reportable data on practitioners

Results:

Under contract to Magna Systems, Synthesis:

- Conducted preliminary research
- Developed a comprehensive communications plan designed to help DQA improve delivery of quality healthcare by:
 - Combating fraud and abuse through disclosure of criminal and civil actions
 - Providing useful, timely, accurate data
 - Enhancing professional accountability at both regulatory and individual levels
- Helped identify ways DQA can continue to develop effective long-term relationships with those agencies who provide data to the data banks, in order to:
 - Determine the nature of any resistance they may have
 - Continually improve the quality of the data
 - Empower agencies in their ethical/moral responsibility for reporting accountability

Client:

Health Resources & Services Administration Bureau of Maternal and Child Health National Coordinating Committee on School Health

Project: Logistic Services
Project Director: Wendy Houston
Period of Performance: September 2000 - September 2001
Client Reference: Trina Anglin, MD, Ph.D. (301) 443-4291

Critical Issue:

The National Coordinating Committee on School Health (NCCSH) was established in order to bring together Federal departments with national nongovernmental organizations to support quality comprehensive school health programs in our Nation's schools. In order to support this important objective, the NCCSH works to improve communications, collaboration and sharing of information among national organizations.

Requirements:

- The NCCSH needs logistics support for convening two planning meetings and one full committee meeting each year
- Support for these meetings includes database development, assembling briefing materials; securing appropriate meeting sites; arranging travel, ground transportation, hotel accommodations, and meals for committee members; onsite support, coordination of a display of member materials, and report development.

Results:

To support these requirements, Synthesis is providing the following services:

- Developing a comprehensive relational database in Microsoft Access for tracking participant information and registration status
- Handling all related logistical support tasks
- Organizing an onsite display of member collateral materials
- Developing clear, concise meeting reports

Client:

Mental Health Association of the District of Columbia

Project: Conduct Leadership Evaluation Survey
Project Director: Dr. John Tabori
Period of Performance: October 1999 – January 2001
Client Reference: Jim Horsfield/202.694.5055

Critical Issue:

The Information Services Division (ISD) of the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS) is known throughout ERS for its commitment to employee development by using state of the art management techniques to facilitate communications among employees and their supervisors at all levels. In the spirit of this commitment, ISD undertook design and implementation of a leadership evaluation survey as an instrument through which employees can express their comments and concerns regarding leadership at the team leader, branch chief, and director levels.

Requirements:

- To ensure complete confidentiality, ISD needed an independent contractor to develop, implement, and report results for this survey effort.
- The sample survey instrument needed to be evaluated for validity and reliability and the subsequent draft tested for clarity by potential respondents.
- In addition to an overall analysis report for the project, ISD wanted individual confidential reports generated for the ISD director, team leaders and branch chiefs.

Result:

Synthesis responded to ISD's evaluation needs with the following tasks:

- Reviewed and revised the sample survey instrument for ease of data entry, proper question sequencing, and content.
- Developed methodology for a double blind study to assure respondent confidentiality
- Developed and tested the survey package - the survey instrument, confidentiality statement, and return package - among volunteers provided by ISD.
- Revised survey package as indicated by test responses and produced 110 survey packages for distribution.
- Developed an agenda and held a videotaped meeting with survey participants to
 - Provide instruction for completing the survey
 - Reiterate the intent of the evaluation
 - Underline the importance of their prompt response
 - Stress the confidential nature of the survey by explaining the double blind design
 - Explain how ISD employees would benefit from this evaluation effort.
- Collected and coded surveys, entered data into SPSS, and generated frequencies and contingency tables.
- Analyzed data, providing average, lowest and highest ratings for each person evaluated by question and overall division ratings by question.
- Developed an analysis report summarizing findings, describing the sample, process, and analytical methods used, and suggesting changes in the process and evaluation form.

Based on our performance on this contract, Synthesis was invited to continue working with ISD to implement at least 2 additional annual leadership evaluations.

Client:

National Women's Business Council

Project: Abstract for Best Practices in Access to Capital Training Programs
Project Director: Gary Golembiewski
Period of Performance: September 2001 - September 2002
Client Reference: Laura Mann/202.205.3850

Critical Issue:

The National Women's Business Council (Council) is a bi-partisan Federal government council founded to serve as an independent source of advice and counsel to the President, Congress, U.S. Small Business Administration, and the Interagency Committee on Women's Business on economic issues of importance to women business owners. Members of the Council are prominent women business owners and leaders of women's business organizations.

The mission of the Council is to promote initiatives, policies and programs designed to support women's business enterprises at all stages of development in the public and private sector marketplaces.

Requirements:

The Council seeks to support the issue of increasing access to capital and credit for women entrepreneurs by:

- Identifying existing training programs on gaining access to capital that target women entrepreneurs
- Determining best practices based on program success parameters
- Synthesizing this information into a set of recommendations on ways these types of programs may be improved

Result:

Synthesis is providing the following services to support this initiative:

- Developing appropriate criteria and identifying nine programs that are suitable study participants
- Developing a standardized protocol for gathering information from these programs, contacting program directors to request information that indicates the level of success of their program and the perceived best practices that make their program successful
- Analyzing the information generated from among the programs and integrating our findings into a report on best practices among study participants and our recommendations for improving similar training programs

Client:

Office of the Surgeon General Department of Health & Human Services

Project: Facilitate Strategic Visioning
For The Public Health Service Commissioned Corps
Project Director: Ruth Anne Gigliotti
Period of Performance: July – August 1999
Client Reference: Dr. Helena Mishoe/301.435.0050

Critical Issue:

The Surgeon General of the United States is the commander in chief of the Public Health Service (PHS) Commissioned Corps (Corps), an elite cadre of mobile and highly trained Commissioned Officers with broad-based public health experience that can be called to action by the Surgeon General to respond to both long- and short-term public health demands. The Corps sought to generate a new vision upon which to base subsequent strategic planning efforts. A series of meetings has been initiated to address questions and environmental factors related to this visioning process.

Requirements:

- The Corps needed a facilitator for a series of discussions among the visioning team to help identify points to consider within a strategic planning process.
- The facilitator was to be an external observer with planning expertise who could help the team to reorganize their thoughts as they developed a series of questions and answers that would form the basis for the Corps' strategic plan.
- The result of these meetings was to be a visioning statement based on key questions and answers about their current and proposed mission and critical issues that impact Corps members.

Result:

Acting as facilitator for these meetings, Synthesis President, Ruth Anne Gigliotti:

- Developed a concise written guide for the planning process tailored to the background and current issues of the Commissioned Corps
- Developed a draft planning outline integrating traditional strategic planning elements with stated elements of the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and with Government Accounting Office (GAO) comments on the Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) draft strategic plan
- Facilitated a series of 6 strategic visioning meetings
- Worked with the Project Officer, Dr. Helena Mishoe, to compile written input from the team into a preliminary visioning statement

As a direct result of work performed on this contract, Dr. Michael Blackwell, Chief of Staff to Surgeon General David Satcher, recommended Synthesis to write a chapter for the upcoming Surgeon General's Report on Violence.

Client:

Small Business Administration Entrepreneurial Development Program

Project: Develop a Methodology for Collecting & Analyzing Economic Outcome Data For SBA's Economic Development Programs

Project Director: Ruth Anne Gigliotti

Period of Performance: September 2001 - March 2002

Client Reference: Janet Strong/202.205.6821

Critical Issue:

SBA's Entrepreneurial Development (ED) offices are the front line providers of SBA's business support programs. The Office of Entrepreneurial Development (OED) houses five program offices, including the Office of Women's Business Ownership, the Office of Native American Affairs, the Office of Business and Community Initiatives, the Office of Small Business Development Centers, and the Office of eSmall Business. These programs offer information, education, training, counseling, and technical assistance that is provided both electronically and at service locations throughout the country. Each programs collects output data. However, the usefulness of these data for program evaluation is constrained by factors including a lack of standardized data types, descriptions and collection methods.

Requirements:

- In order to begin to collect data that are useful to support SBA's GPRA performance plans with consistent economic outcome data, the OED seeks to conduct a comprehensive assessment of current ED program data and data collection methods
- The ED needs a research-based determination of the most efficient method for collecting consistent economic outcome data across all ED programs.

Result:

To support these requirements, Synthesis will undertake the following tasks:

- Develop an interview guide for interviewing data collection specialists in SBA's Financial Assistance, 8(a), Hub Zone, and other Procurement programs about their data collection processes.
- Tailor the interview guide for use in collecting data from which to assess the cost and validity of data collection processes of ED resource partner groups, including:
 - Business Information Centers
 - One Stop Capital Shops
 - Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)
 - Small Business Development Centers
 - Tribal Business Information Centers
 - Women's Business Centers
- Develop an integrated, standardized data collection protocol and survey instrument to collect economic outcome data that incorporates data elements from both internal and external data collection systems
- Conduct a pre-test of the survey instrument among a sample of 9 program clients from at least two programs, integrate pre-test results into final protocol and survey, and develop a technical report.

Client References

Client References

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