VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS MODEL:
A Conceptual Framework

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Robert Carver
Robert.carver@comcast.net
A riddle

How many synagogue board members does it take to change a lightbulb?

https://www.writerswrite.co.za/light-bulb-jokes-for-the-publishing-industry/
Change?

WE'VE ALWAYS

DONE IT THIS WAY!!!!

https://memegenerator.net/instance/70802638/frank-costanza-weve-always-done-it-this-way

Relational Judaism
Using the Power of Relationships to Transform the Jewish Community

Dr. Ron Wolfson
Author of The Spirituality of Reconnecting: How to Transform Your Congregation into a Sacred Community
There is nothing so practical as a good theory.

-- Kurt Lewin --
Once we were slaves...

... to transactional thinking
4 Questions Framework

• What makes a shul different from other organizations?
• What’s your story?
• Will there be hard labor & bitter herbs?
• Next year in Jerusalem?
1. What makes a shul different from other organizations?

• A shul is like a(n) ____________
• Multiple mission(s)?
• How do congregants think about membership?
• How do leaders think about congregants?
  • Member, patron, customer, client, congregant ....
**Transactional-Relational Continuum**

**Transactional Mindset**
- Focus on attendance at next event
- Attract new members
- Short time horizon
- Goal: financial surplus each event
- Mass communication
- Monthly billing
- “Arms length”

**Relational Mindset**
- Focus on retention & loyalty
- Strengthen connections among current members
- Long time horizon
- Goal: loyal, committed members
- Personalized communication
- Frequent contact/ check-in
- “Arms linked”
Why belong?

SPIRITUALITY  COMMUNITY  LEARNING  IDENTIFICATION  HERITAGE
Economics 102: Types of Goods & Services

**Excludable: Exclude non-payers?**

- **Easy**
  - Private Goods (groceries, clothes, electronics, cars, haircuts)
  - Club Goods (Electricity, cable TV, Country club, gym)
- **Hard**
  - Common Goods (public library, fish in the ocean, coal, timber, playgrounds)
  - Public Goods (roads, public safety, national defense, clean air)

**Rivalry**

- **More**
- **Less**

**Transactional**

**Relational**

Where is a synagogue in this diagram?
2. What’s your story?

• What makes your shul distinctive?
• *Magid*: How do you tell it? Who tells it?
• *Yachatz*: Are there splits that might be magnified or healed by this change?
• *Charoset*: What binds the parts of the community together?
• How often do you dip?
• Who are the major characters in your story?
Who Knows 7? McKinsey 7s Model

• Gain organization insight
• Identify dormant potential
• Structure and Culture
• **Importance of Alignment**
• Hard vs Soft elements
• *Manage* change

https://www.edrawsoft.com/mckinsey-7s-model.html
Karl Lewin’s Model of Change

- Unfreeze
- Change
- Refreeze
3. Will there be hard labor & bitter herbs?

**Labor? Yes.**  **Bitter? Possibly**

- **UNFREEZE**
  - Lead community to see need for change
- **CHANGE**
  - Engage Congregants in creating the change
  - Planning the transition
  - Change in one aspect of the shul will have impacts in other aspects (7S)
- **FREEZE**
  - Solidifying the new whole
  - Institutionalize the change
  - Onboard new members

[https://halakhaoftheday.org/2020/04/02/jews-in-egypt-from-prosperity-to-slavery/](https://halakhaoftheday.org/2020/04/02/jews-in-egypt-from-prosperity-to-slavery/)

Transparent communication throughout
Transparency

Financial information

Understand need for change

Look to the long term

Share in creating the change
4. Next year in Jerusalem?
Table 2.5. Age by Jewish identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>JBR</th>
<th>JNR</th>
<th>JMR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

JBR: Jewish by religion  
JNR: Jews of no religion  
JMR: Jews with multiple religions  

Row %'s sum to 100
Fifth Question

How do you sustain it?
Recommended Required Reading
From the 2015 “Are Voluntary Dues...”

A Seder!
A Closing Thought:

Rabbi Yohanan Ben Zakai used to say: "If you have a sapling in your hand and they tell you 'The Messiah is coming!' first plant the sapling and then go to greet the Messiah."

-- from Avot de Rabbi Natan, 31b

https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/115461.2?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en
L’Shana Haba’ah -- Next year in Jerusalem...

• Thank you all
• Success in making change

Contact:  robert.carver@comcast.net