MATERIALS AND WORKSHEETS

The "MacMillan Matrix"

This matrix, developed by Ian MacMillan of the Wharton School of Business, helps you to decide how well your programs "fit" your organization, and whether they're a good strategic investment for your organization. It was developed mainly for social services agencies.

| | | High Program Attractiveness: "Easy" Program | | Low Program Attractiveness: "Difficult" Program | |
		Alternative Coverage High	**Alternative Coverage** Low	**Alternative Coverage** High	**Alternative Coverage** Low
GOOD FIT WITH MISSION AND ABILITIES	**Strong Competitive Position**	1. Compete aggressively	2. Grow aggressively	5. Support the best competitor	6. "Soul of the Agency"
	Weak Competitive Position	3. Divest aggressively	4. Build Strength or Get Out	7. Divest systematically	8. Work collaboratively
POOR FIT WITH MISSION AND ABILITIES		10. Divest systematically		9. Divest Aggressively	

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Explanations

Competitive Position refers to:

■ how much loyalty you have from your client group or community;

■ your success or failure in securing funding;

■ your ability to advocate for the program;

■ the quality of work you do;

■ whether you have the skills to do the work.

Alternative Coverage refers to:

■ whether other organizations can do the work instead of you.

Program Attractiveness refers to:

- good funding possibilities;

- attractiveness to volunteers;

- breadth of support from your constituents or supporters;

- availability of concrete, measurable wins.

When thinking about social service nonprofits, MacMillan presumes that nonprofits should avoid duplicating services (competing unnecessarily) because it fragments resources. He also assumes that nonprofits should specialize in order to deliver high-quality services.

"MACMILLAN MATRIX" REPHRASED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION GROUPS		Attractive Program		Difficult Program	
		Other org's cover this.	Few other org's cover this.	Other org's cover this.	Few other org's cover this.
GOOD FIT WITH MISSION AND ABILITIES	**Strong Competitive Position**	1. Affirm this program and negotiate functions with other org's.	2. Grow in order to pro-vide this service to the movement.	5. Collaborate to share the load or help to find resources.	6. "Soul of the Organization" – find support for this or limit its scope.
	Weak Competitive Position	3. Give this away quickly.	4. Decide with other org's who should do this.	7. Give this to other organiza-tions, sup-portively	8. Collaborate to share the load or give it away.
POOR FIT WITH MISSION AND ABILITIES		9. Give this away quickly.		10. Give this away systematically	

For the environmental and conservation community, the matrix might be rephrased as follows: An interesting way to use the matrix is to categorize your programs in Squares 1 through 10. Do you, for example, have a bunch of "Soul of the Agency" programs (square 6) which absorb your energy but can't be funded? (This is a typical problem when organizations have long-standing programs no longer attractive to funders. You can only afford a certain number of these.) Have you recently expanded into new areas in which your position still isn't strong, so that you now need to decide whether to divest systematically (square 7) or get out quick (square 3).

In difficult times, there's strong pressure to gravitate toward squares 1 and 2, and to compete for those niches which funders will support. But the protection of the Earth requires a host of functions, some fundable and some less so, and as a movement it's essential that we figure out together how to cover them. The advantage of the current financial downturn is that it highlights our need for each other, and offers an opportunity to create a more resilient network of organizations with a clearer sense of accountability to each other.

You can also use the above matrix in discussions with partner organizations, to determine who does what. This involves being willing to hear from others how they view your programs, and where they think their work and yours overlaps.