

**Advanced Co-op Developer Training Session  
Presented by Devco in cooperation with regional  
developers in Manitoba and the Maritimes**

**MANITOBA Session: Winnipeg, February 20-22, 2008**

**MARITIMES Session: Moncton, February 26-28, 2008**

**To REGISTER for either session please contact Melanie Conn at  
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***THE TYPICAL PARTICIPANT***

- works in an environment that currently involves co-op development or will in the future, e.g.
  - government department
  - quasi-government, e.g. Community Futures
  - non-profit corporation
  - consultancy
  - co-op association; and
- has attended some form of basic/introductory training about co-ops and co-op development.

***THE OVERALL GOALS of the Advanced Training Session are to provide participants with***

- the ability to assess when the cooperative option is the right one
- the knowledge to assist groups in the development process; and
- increased skills for how to share new knowledge with potential co-op groups.

***DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY***

- The session is three full days with some flexibility on the final day to accommodate travel schedules;
- Participants will meet during the evening of the second day for a DVD presentation and discussion;
- The session is organized to illustrate six Development Phases plus a final section for reflection on the role of Co-op Developer; [p.2-6]
- Training for each Development Phase will include topics for discussion presented in a systematic way, e.g. steps, checklists, decision points;
- A case study will be used throughout the session to illustrate specific topics and approaches, as well as the regional context;
- Tools will be provided that assist in the application of knowledge, e.g. sample documents, outlines, examples.
- Participants will be expected to bring examples from their workplace for discussion in class and to assist in the application of concepts.

## **1. PRE-DEVELOPMENT**

*By the end of this phase, the group has a common vision about what product or service the co-op will provide, they have determined there is a market for their product or service, and they have identified some resources to help them complete the development process.*

***Participants will learn how to “warm the ground” for a co-op project by assisting a group to attend to initial foundational issues as well to understand how to facilitate the process effectively.***

### **TOPICS:**

- Understanding the different origins of co-ops
- Assessing the preliminary feasibility of the business, e.g. is there a market for the product/service?
- Assessing the “fit” of potential members and the co-op’s goals, e.g. values, individual financial objectives, family responsibilities, time constraints and values
- Evaluating the readiness of the group to build the co-op and use its services
- Building member capacity to participate in the development of the co-op, e.g. encouraging participation in meetings and decision-making
- Accessing financial and other resources to assist with the development of the co-op
- Understanding the role of a “parent” organization if applicable, i.e. a social enterprise co-op
- Establishing that co-op is the right choice (or not)

## **2. BUILDING THE GROUP; ESTABLISHING THE CO-OP FORM**

*By the end of this phase, there is an active and committed steering committee prepared to become the founding directors. There are members identified who understand their relationship with the co-op, support its formation and will use its services. The group is prepared to obtain skills and training if necessary.*

***Participants will learn how to assist a group to establish the framework for developing the co-op by understanding key issues and relationships; as well as to understand how to facilitate the process.***

**TOPICS:**

- Developing the steering committee
- Recruiting potential members
  - Understanding the role of strategic planning, e.g. how/when; timeline constraints
- Understanding how members use the services of various types of co-op
- Recruiting potential members
- Understanding the role of the Co-op Developer: "Staff" developer vs. contract developer, authority, terms of relationship
- Exploring the details of the relationship between the co-op and a parent organization

**3. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND INCORPORATION**

*By the end of this phase, the co-op is incorporated, members of the steering committee are directors and understand their new role. The capital structures reflect identified needs and opportunities for investment.*

***Participants will learn how to assist a group to move into the "ownership mindset", i.e. to understand the incorporation process and to establish effective structures for accountability and decision-making; and for raising start-up capital.***

**TOPICS:**

- Building governance capacity, board roles and responsibilities
- Forming committees
- Clarifying membership eligibility and evaluating the need for more than one membership class
- Determining the relationships between membership, board and management
- Determining how capital will be structured
- Understanding the characteristics of for-profit and not-for-profit co-operatives
- Exploring decision-making and control issues; delineating responsibilities between board and management, operations vs. governance
- Discussing options for integrating non-member shareholders and implications re Securities regulations
- Understanding and preparing the documents required for incorporation
- Understanding requirements after incorporation, e.g. annual reporting

#### **4. PLANNING AND ORGANIZING THE BUSINESS**

*By the end of this phase, the co-op has a well-developed business plan, and is prepared to approach potential lenders and/or investors. The directors are prepared to purchase membership shares or investment shares if the latter are part of the co-op's financial structure. Management and board roles are clearly defined, and there is support for the management structure.*

***Participants will learn how to assist a group to understand and participate in the development of the business plan that will guide the co-op through its start-up and early operation, assist in securing the financing required and evaluate options for structuring the venture's capital.***

##### **TOPICS:**

- Understanding the elements of business planning
- Measuring community impact:
  - Social Return on Investment (SROI)
  - Social/Business cost breakdown
  - Multiplier effect calculation
- Understanding financial considerations, e.g.
  - capital needed
  - member investment
  - other investment capital
  - borrowed capital
  - supplier credit, commercial leases
  - grants, subsidies
  - creative ways of dealing with members' ability to invest
  - members on social assistance
- Understanding options for business structure:
  - the co-op as sole owner,
  - joint venture with an existing business,
  - operating through a subsidiary,
  - incorporating a side-by-side associated non-profit

## **5. IMPLEMENTATION AND LAUNCH**

*By the end of this phase, management and staff have been hired and are in place, equipment and facilities have been secured, and the business has launched.*

***Participants will learn how to assist a group to put its planning into practice, leading to the co-op's opening day.***

### **TOPICS:**

- Hiring management; timing, criteria, hiring process
- Developing operational systems, policies, procedures
- Dealing with conflict within the co-op
- Developing policy structure
- Electing and training the first board of directors
- Determining the role of the Co-op Developer in follow-up phase

## **6. SUSTAINABILITY, FOLLOW-UP AND MENTORING**

*By the end of this phase, the business is operating within projections, there is good communication between management and board, and there is a shared commitment to achieve positive results.*

***Participants will learn how to assist a group to establish systems to sustain and grow the co-op after launching the business.***

### **TOPICS:**

- Designing and installing: monitoring/reporting procedures and protocols
- Identifying available community resources
- Achieving independence from a parent organization; process and timeline
- Recruiting, hiring, orienting new members
- Developing education process for members
- Connecting with the co-op sector

## ***THE CO-OP DEVELOPER***

***Participants will reflect on their role as Co-op Developers and explore ways to strengthen their effectiveness.***

### ***TOPICS:***

- What do you like/not like about the role?
- What supports do you need? What are available?
- What support can you get or do you want from government? from the co-op sector?
- How do you decide what your next steps as a developer are with a group?
- What other roles might the developer take? becoming a member of the co-op? representing the co-op at events or with lenders or investors?
- How can government and sector-based developers support each other's work?