



Equipping the Victoria Cool Aid Society to navigate the challenges of growth and capacity

Case Study: Victoria Cool Aid Society

As the largest provider of services to individuals experiencing homelessness, poverty, and other effects of marginalization in Greater Victoria, British Columbia, the Victoria Cool Aid Society is committed to improving the lives of the most vulnerable in their community.



Facing a dramatic increase in their affordable housing and health portfolios, Cool Aid wanted to optimize their organizational structure to support effective and sustainable growth. Their

senior leadership team engaged Junxion to review, assess and make recommendations. We produced a capacity review report and a new organization chart. The report recommends a phased approach that supports the full implementation of Cool Aid's new strategic plan.



It was a valuable experience working with Junxion on this project. They really did offer some 'audacious' ideas that brought clarity to which efforts we needed to focus our attention, and to chart a course for the next few years to more effectively meet our strategic goals.

KATHY STINSON
CEO, VICTORIA COOL AID SOCIETY

The Challenge

Cool Aid recognized that it could not continue to grow until changes were made to its organizational design. To do so would risk staff turnover, chip away at their capacity for excellent client care, and erode the Society's reputation.

Increasing demand for services, the opioid epidemic, and Covid-19 made it a challenging time for the health and social care sector. As staff managed these crises in their own lives, they were bringing diminished capacity to work to support their clients.

Cool Aid engaged Junxion to review, assess and make recommendations on the optimal structure to find and renew efficiencies within the organization—to liberate capacity.

This engagement took place at a time of significant strain on Cool Aid and the broader community. The combined effect of the housing and affordability crisis, the ongoing opioid epidemic, and the global COVID-19 pandemic are impacting community members' mental health and wellbeing.

How We Helped

Junxion undertook a materials review, environment scan, and surveyed how Cool Aid's peers are managing these challenges. We interviewed staff, ran focus groups, and designed and facilitated two highly engaging workshops. We explored the parameters of 'safety' in social services and healthy workplaces and examined how staff can better support one another through workplace challenges.

Junxion's approach is deliberately inclusive. We spoke with external advisory bodies including Cool Aid's Diversity & Inclusion consultants to confirm recommendations aligned with best practices, and engaged an independent HR expert and professor to review the draft report.

Cool Aid is a large and complicated organization, but due to COVID constraints, we were unable to visit their sites or meet managers in-person, which hampered our learning and analysis. It also proved difficult to gather insights into peers' organizing models, which we had anticipated would provide useful benchmarks. Our first draft of the potential organizational design was over-ambitious.

Measuring Success

Ultimately, while the project required more effort from Junxion and from Cool Aid's leadership, the final report gives Cool Aid a framework to navigate and implement change. It recommends a phased approach over three years and supports the full implementation of the new strategic plan, including organizational growth. Senior leadership team members also now have clear talking points and plans to enhance and increase staff capacity.

The new organization chart serves as an aspirational model that Cool Aid can adapt as their needs and the needs in their communities evolve. Co-creating the new organization chart with the core project team created a sense of shared ownership. Recruitment is currently underway for a number of recommended new roles.



Are you ready to define your social purpose and embed it in your strategy? Reach out to [Mike Rowlands](#) in Vancouver, [Shayla Meyer](#) in Toronto, or [Adam Garfunkel](#) in the UK to start a conversation.