

# Colorado Cancer Research Program

## Case Study: Strategic Consulting Partnership

### ABOUT THE CLIENT

Colorado Cancer Research Program (CCRP) provides cancer patients access to these clinical trials. CCRP was founded in 1983 in order to bring cancer research studies to people in Colorado communities. CCRP is part of a national program funded through the National Cancer Institute (NCI) designed to engage community physicians in clinical trials. The physicians test and validate the latest interventions against cancer. When the trials report successful results, the community investigators rapidly adopt the findings, which benefit the subsequent patients who are treated.

### HISTORY

For the last seven years, Corona Insights has served as CCRP's trusted advisor. During Corona's first engagement with CCRP, Karla Raines, Principal, was hired to facilitate the annual board retreat. After the initial engagement, CCRP took advantage of a grant opportunity to hire Corona for executive leadership development to strengthen core organizational systems. Like many non-profits, CCRP had been so focused on doing great work in the community that they had neglected to develop the internal capabilities of their leadership board. CCRP desired guidance to refocus the board's effort on governance and strategic oversight.

Due to the longevity of the relationship, Corona Insights has become an incredibly valuable business partner to CCRP. Corona is able to address the

major issues because they understand CCRP's environment and history so there is never time wasted explaining the intricacies of the complex organization to a new consultant.



“As a CCRP board member I am pleased with the contributions that Corona Insights has brought to our organization. We have seen many positive changes as a result of Corona's work including: managing strategic planning as an ongoing process, annual reviews with the board to determine strategic planning results, and strengthening the board's ability to work more cohesively.”

Norman Benedict  
CCRP Board Member, Vice-Chair Executive  
Development & Nominating Committee



## CORONA'S SOLUTION

Karla, who is deeply passionate about the community and organizational strategy, jumped into action at the opportunity to serve this nonprofit. CCRP has called upon Corona to facilitate each subsequent board retreat since the original engagement. CCRP's annual retreat has been a phenomenal opportunity for the board to refocus on big picture goals. A chance to examine questions like, "what must we do to truly be statewide?" and "how can we effectively engage physicians, hospitals, and patients?" Karla, our firm's primary strategist, has worked over the years with CCRP to create their strategic plan, a leadership succession plan, revise their business model, and develop a "scorecard" to measure the organization's effectiveness at implementing the strategic plan.

Beyond strategic planning, executive coaching, and board retreats, CCRP has been able to tap into the full array of services offered by Corona Insights. In 2011 Corona conducted a communications audit to evaluate CCRP's positioning and align communications to their strategic plan. We measured stakeholder satisfaction and performed a website evaluation to sharpen the organizations messaging. In addition, Corona Insights has engaged in efforts to help CCRP strengthen relationships with partners and language to communicate the organizations business case to member hospitals.

## THE OUTCOME

CCRP's strategic plan is a living document that evolves each year depending on the last year's progress and current context. It is also extremely valuable that Corona Insights personally knows each board member and genuinely cares



about the success of CCRP. It's never just a project or transaction, through and through this business relationship has been a partnership.

*“ With limited administrative staff, it is a relief that we can depend on Corona to facilitate meetings, document everything, recommend follow-up, and we can always count on them if we need an additional set of colleagues to bounce around new ideas. ”*

*Jane Hajovsky, former Executive Director  
Colorado Cancer Research Program*

Nonprofits which operate under the guidance of a diverse board must work to build consensus around a shared vision among a board of directors. The CCRP board encompasses a broad range of professionals from physicians to attorneys to CFOs. Much of Corona's work has focused on consensus building through shared understanding and creating a shared mission that keeps everyone unified. Having a great board allows CCRP to engage in the real issues, focus of strategic governance, and harness the valuable feedback and critical thinking of board members.

Corona's lasting legacy at CCRP will be a stable organization equipped to navigate external changes with strong leadership. The organization has been in Colorado for 30 years and its' resilience means access to clinical trials for hundreds of Coloradans. With a unified board of directors, a solid business model, and audacious strategic plan, CCRP is equipped to handle whatever the future has to bring. With confidence we know CCRP will continue connecting hope and medical science for Colorado residents seeking clinical trials.