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Nonprofit World

Advancement Through Sharing

Use Design Thinking to Solve Worrisome Problems

THIS APPROACH YIELDS AMAZING RESULTS

PLUS:

How to Survive the Funding Crisis

Smart Daily Habits Will Make You a Better Leader

A Tool to Prioritize Opportunities

Make Sure You Get Credit for In-Kind Donations

Best Practices for Gaining Grants

The Five Essentials for Workplace Wellness

...and more

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Advancing the nonprofit world together

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contents

volume 43 · number 4 · 2025

FEATURE ARTICLE

Great innovators have a different way of looking at problems. They often use a process called design thinking that helps them challenge assumptions and come up with novel ideas. As described in **"Use Design Thinking to Solve Worrisome Problems" (page 16),** they do so by putting themselves in the shoes of their stakeholders to find creative solutions.

ARTICLES

DEPARTMENTS

What Really Matters?

Of all the things you'll do today, which ones will really matter? Will the issues you focus on be the ones that make a difference, or will they be time wasters?

If you wonder how to manage your time better, you may be asking the wrong question. "Why You Really Don't Have a Time Management Problem" (page 35) posits that it's not your time you need to manage but, rather, your priorities. Stephen Covey put it this way: "The key is not to prioritize what's on your schedule, but to schedule your priorities."

Setting priorities may be the most crucial thing you do each day. It's also one of the hardest. "A Tool to Prioritize Opportunities" (page 20) will help.

The wisdom in "Smart Daily Habits Will Make You a Better Leader" (page 24) comes from coaches who help leaders succeed. Many of the surprising habits they describe have to do with using your energy wisely, keeping distractions at bay, and breaking big goals into smaller chunks.

In "Secrets to Becoming More Productive" (page 18), Karin Hurt zeroes in on setting limits as the key to productivity. As she asserts, it takes courage to say "no." It takes humility to accept your limitations and realize you can't do everything. It takes wisdom to choose excellence somewhere over presence everywhere.

One way to sort through the array of possibilities competing for attention is to let your values drive your choices. In *Chasing Perfection,* Sue Hawkes notes, "When we're making decisions based on our values, we're doing what matters and we're at our best."

It's when you concentrate on the right things and follow them through to completion that you find the illusive state of balance we're all striving to reach. Hawkes explains that visiting that place of balance means learning to slow down and choose what to say "yes" and "no" to, based on your values. One way to keep your priorities aligned with your values is through the practice of calendaring (take a quick look at "Let Your Values Lead the Way" on page 32).

Making strategic choices is the subject of *The Call,* in which San Diego Zoo's strategy officer describes transforming the zoo's vision. Read about it in "Tale of Transformation & a New Breed of Strategic Plan" on page 33.

After getting your priorities straight, the next step is to communicate these key objectives so that people will help you carry them out. You can find exercises to improve communication in "Use Design Thinking to Solve Worrisome Problems" (page 16) and "Ten Questions for Leadership Success" (page 21).

One aspect of leadership that often slips too far down the priority list is organizational culture. Culture is such a large, nebulous thing that it seems easier to focus on more concrete items. But we can tackle culture the same way we address each of our priorities – bit by bit, step by step, piece by piece. Begin by asking employees how they feel about the organizational culture and what might make them feel better ("Culture Questions," page 32).

"Choose excellence somewhere over presence everywhere."

The best way to make your organization more productive is to create a culture of employee engagement. If low engagement is a problem, it's a direct consequence of your choices as a leader, according to Mark Miller. The cure is to connect with people's deepest passion. "Win the Heart of Every Employee" (page 34), based on Miller's book, describes a way to create a culture of full engagement. In such an organization, everyone will feel eager to seize the next opportunity on your priority list and help you bring it to fruition.

Jill Muehrcke, muehrcke@charter.net

Five Things to Do Next Monday

Here are a few concrete things you can do right now to begin transforming your organization.

1. **Query yourself,** using "10 Questions for Leadership Success" (page 21), and commit to making positive changes on the basis of your answers.
2. **Plan a design-thinking session with your team** to solve a problem that's challenging your organization right now (see page 16.)
3. **Perform the exercise** detailed in "Let Your Values Lead the Way" (page 32) to ensure that you're spending your time doing what matters most for you.
4. **Distribute the article** on page 28 and plan a meeting with key staff to discuss ways to survive the funding crisis, as Max Friedman suggests.
5. **Ask the questions** in "Springboard Your Thinking" (page 35) to clarify priorities.

Make Sure You Get Credit for In-Kind Donations

How should you value non-cash donations on your tax returns and grant applications?

Q How do we accurately estimate the cost of in-kind donations on our Form 990 tax information returns and for grant applications? Can we include items (in our case, musical instruments) that have been loaned to us as in-kind donations?

> "This question is deceptively simple."

A This deceptively simple question raises a large number of legal and accounting issues. It involves different types of in-kind gifts, differences between tax accounting and financial accounting, and the opportunity to use your numbers on grant applications without regard to the formal rules.

On your tax return, you should record contributions of "stuff" (tables and chairs, art, computers, etc.) at the fair market value of the items you receive. Donors who give you stuff worth more than $500 will have to estimate the value (and obtain an independent appraisal for claims of more than $5,000). Ask them about the values, and use your own judgment if they seem far off the mark. You can't include the value of volunteer services or the use of facilities (or musical instruments) on your tax return, and the loans aren't deductible to the donor.

Generally you should follow the same rules with regard to "stuff" on your financial statements. However, the FASB (Financial Accounting Standards Board) rules do allow you to value certain contributed services if they're provided by people with specialized skills necessary for your program or if they enhance the non-financial assets of the organization. In most cases you'll have to record an equal expense in order to balance the financial accounting. Work with your accountant to determine what should be recorded in this area.

But even if you don't or can't include donated services or use of facilities on your financial statements, there's no legal rule that says you can't list their value on a grant application if it helps show the scope and the value of the work your organization does. If you make clear the source and type of your in-kind donations, the grantmaker can decide how it wants to count them.

Don Kramer, Nonprofit Issues, nonprofitissues.com

More Guidance on Non-Cash Gifts (NonprofitWorld.org)

Valuing In-Kind Gifts (Vol. 25, No. 5)

Donated Computers – Burden or Blessing? (Vol. 21, No. 3)

Looking a Gift Horse in the Mouth: Gifts of Property (Vol. 16, No. 1)

Don't Alienate Donors by Giving Them Improper Receipts (Vol. 31, No. 6)

Do You Have a Policy for Real-Estate Gifts? (Vol. 25, No. 3)

Property Donations: How to Eliminate Liability & Gain a Steady Income (Vol. 36, No. 4)

Pitfalls to Avoid when Seeking Corporate Support (Vol. 34, No. 4)

Demystifying the Receipting of Charitable Gifts (Vol. 14, No. 3)

Software Asset Management in the Age of Blockchain

Defeat your organization's three-headed IT monster.

By Jeremy L. Boerger

As a nonprofit leader, you face an enormous challenge – how to keep track of your information technology investment and ensure it's adding value to the organization. There is a dizzying array of acronyms – ITAMS, SAMS, FinOps, CMDB, SaaS, etc. – that promise to provide clarity to the chaos and yet fail to deliver. But, more important, there is a solution: blockchain.

First, a quick primer:

ITAM (Internet Technology Asset Management) allows you to plan and manage the entire life-cycle of all your IT assets. ITAM helps you maximize value, control costs, manage risks, meet regulatory and contractual requirements, and make the right decisions. SAM (Software Asset Management) is a *subset* of ITAM. In theory, SAM enables you to administer, control, and protect your software assets by managing their acquisition, development, release, deployment, maintenance, and (eventual) retirement.

> "SAM Blockchain can foster trust between participants."

Your organization should be able to cut spending for software licenses by as much as 30% as a result of implementing a strong SAM program. But few, if any, organizations report even coming close to break-even with their ITAM and SAM programs. According to a recent survey, over 60% of executives surveyed admit their ITAM program isn't even self-funding, let alone delivering cost reductions, and nearly half acknowledge their program won't be funding itself within the next two years!

Why do most SAM programs fail? Current SAM programs and tools are pulled in three different directions by three different groups, each with their own goals and agendas. Failure to recognize their needs and demands are the primary drivers of bloated IT budgets. The three heads of this monster are:

1. Software Publishers: Their goal is to generate revenue above all else. Revenue allows them to develop innovative products, stay competitive, and make their shareholders happy.

2. Corporate Customers (you): – Yes, you. Your goal is to acquire the best, fastest, and most cost-effective IT services and achieve an excellent ROI over the lifetime of each product. It seems obvious to state your part in this problem, but, as they say, knowledge of the problem inherently changes the nature of the problem.

> "Software license audits force you to stop what you're doing and scramble."

3. Corporate End-Users: Their goal is to be able to use the latest and greatest software so they can meet and exceed their project goals.

Each group cannot trust the other two to not undermine their goals. The software publishers are worried about software piracy undercutting their sales revenue; the corporate customers are worried about cost, compliance, and license audits; and the corporate end-users just want to get the job done the fastest and easiest way they know how.

A blockchain-based SAM could solve this problem, because blockchain was invented to foster trust between hesitant participants. Here's how:

Smart Contracts: Smart Contracts contain automated instructions and rules stored within the Distributed Ledger (more on that below). They guide the formation of block data without user intervention. As a corporate client, you could stop worrying about going out of compliance: When you need a license and don't have one, the Smart Contract would automatically transfer a license not being used or kick off the purchase of a new one.

Distributed Ledgers: Every participant in the blockchain network has access to a copy of the record of transactions, or the ledger. Furthermore, all these transactions are automatically shared between them. Everyone can instantaneously see when a transaction is happening. A blockchain-based SAM tool would allow software publishers to see which version of their software is being used.

Even better, all the copies of the ledger would be encrypted and limited: Publishers would know how many of their licenses are being used at all times, but they couldn't view exact names, the nature of the work, IP addresses, etc. – all of which are cybersecurity risks.

Immutable Records: With blockchains, every action is encrypted in such a way that if a participant attempts to alter a record after it has been entered and accepted into the Distributed Ledger, all participants are instantly alerted and can come together to agree on a solution.

You can see how SAM Blockchain can foster trust between participants who inherently can't trust each other.

Here's how the blockchain would benefit each head of the three-headed monster:

For Software Publishers: It's been estimated that a whopping 40% of the sales revenue that software publishers receive comes from software license audits. And that 40% can cost them even more, considering how much they have to pay auditors to claw back that money.

For Corporate Clients (that's you, remember): Software license audits force you to stop what you're doing and scramble. SAM Blockchain would save you time, energy, and money.

For Corporate End-Users: Employees would no longer have to worry about getting in trouble in order to do their jobs.

It's painfully apparent that our current SAM tools and techniques aren't delivering on their promises. We still deal with untrustworthy data, software breaches, and painful audit penalties. A SAM Blockchain solution could be the key to solving the underpinning problems and trust issues that cause most SAM and ITAM programs to fail.

Jeremy L. Boerger, the "ITAM coach," founded Boerger Consulting (boergerconsulting.com) with the idea of helping organizations "cut their software budget without buying less software." He also speaks professionally to pass along his 20+ years' experience to the next generation of ITAM and SAM professionals. He is the author of Rethinking Information Technology Asset Management.

IT Risks & Benefits

For more on how to use your data and information technology wisely, see articles such as these at NonprofitWorld.org:

Hacking People: Why Your Biggest Vulnerability Isn't in Your IT Department (Vol. 37, No. 1)

The Purposeful Techie: Nonprofit IT with Intention (Vol. 30, No. 5)

Two Surprising Ways to Broaden Your Reach Online (Vol. 32, No. 4)

How to Introduce Employees to New Tech (Vol. 40, No. 3)

Use Data to Cultivate Long-Term Donor Engagement (Vol. 38, No. 4)

Harnessing the Internet to Raise Funds (Vol. 31, No. 2)

Are You Prepared for a Cybersecurity Incident? (Vol. 38, No. 4)

Find the Funding You Need: Grant Management Best Practices

Here's how to find – and keep – the funds you need.

By Peter Gamache & Jackie Sue Griffin

Grant management may seem intimidating and complicated – and it does require careful preparation and execution. Poor grant management is one of the fastest ways to damage a reputation with a funder and ensure you lose those necessary dollars. Use these guidelines to help you find and keep the funding.

Connect Your Grant Writer & Finance Professional

The team who asks for the grant is often different from the team who manages the money when it comes in. Most grant proposals demand a budget, so you want to include the finance department from the beginning – and then they'll play an important role in the grant's management and reporting.

When budgeting for grants, you're thinking about some important "what if" scenarios:

- **What happens** if you get the grant?
- **Can you successfully monitor and manage it** over time?

It's the financial professionals who can answer these questions. Be sure to check with them before starting to write the proposal. They can tell you if you'll be able to manage the grant in a sustainable way. If you can't, then you need to make some changes in your finances or look elsewhere for funding.

Have a Fundraising Strategy

It's important to ask yourself these questions:

- **How long** will you have the funding available?
- **If your organization is asking** for a one-year grant, what are the odds that it will be renewed for at least a few more years?
- **If it probably won't be renewed,** is your development team ready to get donor support to continue funding this program?

Fine-tune Your Policies & Procedures

Develop internal policies and procedures, including the job description of the grant manager. Such policies provide staff with instructions for keeping centralized control of all grant activities, such as submitting grant applications and maintaining contact with potential funders.

The grant manager is the primary contact person for issues that involve grants. Team members should submit grant materials to the manager for review to assure that these submissions are professional, complete, and include all the necessary signatures. You can prepare the staff for adoption of these procedures by organizing a training.

Keep Good Records

Use a database to record and keep track of all contact with foundations and other grantors. Your grant calendar can consist of a wall calendar, a whiteboard, a shared Google calendar, spreadsheets or – ideally – a grant management solution such as GrantHub that ties it all together. Whatever you choose, be sure you meet the following criteria:

- **Everyone is aware** of upcoming deadlines.
- **All team members can see** their upcoming due dates and easily access documents.
- **Task owners receive** reminders when due dates are coming.
- **New opportunities are added** to the calendar.
- **Recurring funding opportunities are reflected** in your future plans.
- **You can see at a glance** where your grant is in its lifecycle: application, approval, award, progress, evaluation, and results.

Internally Report on Your Progress

Be prepared to put together summary reports that communicate to your board and leadership the progress and status of your grant-seeking efforts. This takes just a few clicks with the right software, but you can also set up spreadsheet templates for tracking and reporting.

Use Metrics to Drive Grant Performance

Once you start reporting on relevant metrics, you can continue to streamline your process. Relevant metrics will make the grant process more consistent and timely in tracking the information you need.

Peter Gamache, PhD, is president of the Turnaround Achievement Network. Jackie Griffin, MBA, MS, BA (jackiegriffin72@gmail.com) is the owner and executive director of Jackie Sue Griffin & Associates (jsg-associates.com), working to turn around problems, deficits, and barriers within human service systems.

More Grant Management Tips

Take a dive into the details of writing – and keeping – a grant with these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

How to Answer the Dreaded Grant Question about Future Funding (Vol. 31, No. 1)

Two Keys to Successful Grant Proposals (Vol. 15, No. 3)

Nonprofits & Funders: Two Sides of the Same Coin? (Vol. 24, No. 4)

Grant Writers' Other Role (Vol. 18, No. 4)

Think Out of the Box for Fundraising Gains (Vol. 29, No. 5)

The Challenge of Sustaining a Grant-Funded Program (Vol. 28, No. 6)

The Joys of Risk (Vol. 28, No. 3)

How Much? Five Factors to Consider When Choosing a Grant Request Size (Vol. 31, No. 3)

Seven Deadly Grantwriting Sins (Vol. 27, No. 6)

please get in touch...

We would love to hear your response to anything in **Nonprofit World**, your comments about any aspect of the nonprofit sector, and your concerns about your daily work. Please get in touch in any of the following ways:

Drop us a note at: Letters to the Editor, Nonprofit World, P.O. Box 44173, Madison, Wisconsin 53744-4173.

E-mail to: muehrcke@charter.net

Please include your name, organization, address, phone number, and e-mail address. If you'd like your comments to appear anonymously, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you!

WHAT'S UP ONLINE?

Would you like to discuss some of the issues addressed in ***Nonprofit World*** with other nonprofit professionals? Do you have questions to ask or expertise of your own to share?

Society for Nonprofits is actively engaged on LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Find us on your favorite social media platform by visiting **social.snpo.org**

Can You Prove Your Board Supports Your Organization?

Gather the evidence. The results may surprise you.

By Karen Eber Davis

Imagine you've been asked to prove to a jury that your board members are doing a good job of supporting your organization. What would the verdict be? Would a lawyer find enough evidence to prove that the board is doing its job? Below is a list of the evidence you need to make the case. Use it to help your board members prove their worth.

Evidence #1: Do They Give Gifts?

How many board members provide personal gifts of money to your organization? Many donors want the organization they support to have 100% of board members who give. You can understand their reasoning: Why would someone less familiar with your organization, such as a new donor or foundation, be more committed than people close to it, such as a board member? While the amount given by board members is important to your organization's finances, to outside donors the percent who give according to their means is the critical evidence.

Evidence #2: How Many Attend Meetings?

All board members must be engaged enough to attend meetings on a regular basis. "Whether members attend meetings in person, remotely, or via proxy," tracking attendance is critical in measuring an organization's success, according to Govenda.com. Here are a few ways to maintain good attendance:

Create an attendance policy. As part of your bylaws, you should have a strict board meeting attendance policy,

> "Use this evidence to prove your board's worth."

including repercussions if the policy is overlooked by a member. For example, a board member who misses more than 25% of board or committee meetings per year could be subject to removal.

Be organized. Predetermine goals for each meeting and make them known to members in advance. Distribute agendas and supporting documentation including board books before meetings take place. Expect all members to arrive at meetings fully prepared and informed with specific goals in place. Always start and end meetings on time. When members know their time is valued, they're more willing to participate in meetings.

Ask board members to evaluate the effectiveness of meetings. Such assessments can be conducted anonymously at the end of meetings. It may be helpful to take advantage of electronic surveys and polls to make self-assessments easier and quicker for board members to take.

Evidence #3: How Many Serve on Committees?

Board participation on committees supports the smooth functioning of your organization. It helps the board do business quickly at its future meetings.

Evidence #4: Are They Hands-on?

Do your board members interact with the people your organization serves? Hands-on participation differs from committee work. It includes time spent engaged in the organization's services – for example, attending plays, building houses, or helping with registration. Direct service helps board members improve their knowledge base for decision-making.

Evidence #5: Are They Good Stewards?

Besides leading in giving money to the organization, board members must also encourage others to give. How many of your board members encourage existing donors to continue giving and enhance their relationship with your organization? Evidence includes activities like making thank-you telephone calls, meeting with county commissioners who contract with your organization, and visiting with donors to learn about their interests or to request major gifts.

Evidence #6: Do They Help You Make Connections?

Do your board members help you make new community connections? This piece of proof includes the number of members who help you obtain in-kind resources, sponsorships, and partnerships. To enhance organizational memory, estimate the total number of connections created and generate a list of them (for instance, Swift Printing Company, Royal Bank, and Webby Website). Include the board member who helped you receive a discount on your technology purchase, the one who facilitated a loan at the bank, and so on.

Evidence #7: Do They Link You to Their Friends?

Explore the number of organizations with whom a board member links you. Look at evidence that your board members help you deepen connections with individuals. For example: Maria invites eight people to sit at her table during your special event. Tyrone takes you to lunch at his club meeting. Overlap will exist between #6 and #7. Your board member can help you connect with the local bank and personally with the bank president. When board members help you make new friends, you enlarge the size of the community involved in your organization.

Evidence #8: Are They Always Learning?

How many board members are participating in educational experiences to learn more about your organization's mission or their responsibilities as board members? Are they reading and discussing relevant articles and books? Are they attending offsite events as well as the training opportunities you provide for them?

Evidence #9: What Else Do They Do?

Each organization offers unique opportunities and additional ways to measure board involvement, such as, for example, participating in your speaker's bureau. What additional support is needed? How might you measure other forms of active support? Do you want to offer any new opportunities, such as job shadowing or an orientation experience for new board members? Do you have a legacy society that board members can join?

When it comes to board support, you want a lot of proof. Ask your board members to help you collect evidence to prove their support. You'll learn that some members provide support that hasn't been recognized to date. Some members will learn new ways to increase their support.

Gather this information, and share the results with your board members. Include a mean, mode, and range to clarify the percentage of board members who are offering support. Celebrate the results. Challenge your board members to be even more supportive in the future. Then include this and other information in your written documents – your case statement, grants, and annual reports – so that your donors and the community understand the commitment that stands behind your organization.

"Your board members can help you collect proof."

Karen Eber Davis (karen@kedconsult.com) is an expert in maximizing philanthropic impact. She is the author of 7 Nonprofit Income Streams: Open the Floodgates to Sustainability! *and* Let's Raise Nonprofit Millions Together.

Boost Board Engagement & Effectiveness

Fortunately, there are many measures you can implement to enhance the success of your board. Find further details in a range of articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

How to Assess and Improve Your Board's Performance (24, No. 1)

Do Your Board Members Know Their Fiduciary Responsibilities? (Vol. 33, No. 1)

Does 100% Board Giving Matter? (Vol. 35, No. 1)

Twelve Ways to Liven Up Your Board Meetings – And Your Board (Vol. 36, No. 3)

How Can You Boost Board Turnout? (Vol. 38, No. 4)

Using Board Portals to Keep Directors Connected (Vol. 29, No. 3)

Board Problems Reflected in Training Requests (Vol. 33, No. 1)

Secrets to Creating a Board that Makes Cash Gifts (Vol. 37, No. 2)

Do You Have These Four Crucial Committees? (Vol. 32, No. 4)

Your Board Can Help You Gain Major Gifts (Vol. 39, No. 2)

Reciprocal Board Agreements: What Do Board Members Give? What Do They Receive in Return? (Vol. 28, No. 1)

How to Run the Perfect Board Meeting – While Inspiring Board Members to Raise Funds (Vol. 36, No. 4)

Don't Let the Weather Put Your Organization at Risk

Are you ready for the weather to come this winter? A risk-control expert answers your questions.

By Eric Spacek

Whether your organization invites people into your facility or takes your mission on the road, the weather can present a host of hazards – and the winter season holds special dangers. Use the following guidance to keep people safe from harm and your organization protected from expensive lawsuits and insurance claims.

How can we prevent slip and fall accidents on our property?

Slip and fall accidents lead to many insurance claims and lawsuits – especially during the winter. Here are ways you can help protect people from slipping and falling on their way to and from your building:

Have a process for clearing ice and snow. You should have people within your organization – or an outside company – ready to remove ice and snow when needed. If snow falls during hours people are on-site, snow should be cleared at regular intervals.

Provide bags of salt or sand near your doors. Make it easy for staff and volunteers to find de-icing supplies quickly.

Keep ice from building up outside. A clogged roof gutter or accumulation of snow on the roof can result in water or slush dripping onto the sidewalk below – an accident waiting to happen.

What should we do when a storm is imminent?

You should have a written severe-weather preparedness plan and be ready to execute it. A few things to consider:

Confirm emergency phone and contact information. If a key person isn't available, who is the backup person?

Test your emergency communication processes.

Ensure that you have enough fuel for your generators, and check your emergency supply kits to be sure they're fully stocked.

Plan how you'll communicate to your staff, volunteers, the community, and the people you serve if you need to close operations.

> **"The winter season holds special dangers."**

> **"Keep your organization protected from expensive lawsuits and insurance claims."**

How do we keep our pipes from freezing?

Burst or frozen pipes can cause devastating damage. Reduce this risk with the following procedures:

Keep your thermostat set to 55 degrees or warmer – even when no one is using the building.

Make sure pipes in attics, crawl spaces, and along outside walls are insulated. Wrap pipes with specially designed insulation in unheated or minimally heated areas.

Know how to turn off the water to your building in the event of a heating failure. If freezing temperatures are in the forecast, let faucets drip to keep water moving through the pipes.

Install a water and temperature monitoring system. This can alert you if the temperature inside your facility falls below a pre-determined level.

Should we worry about snow and ice accumulation on our roof?

Consult your building plans or a contractor to determine the snow load rating of your roof. Be prepared to monitor and remove snow and ice from vulnerable roof sections. As a rule of thumb, the following add about five pounds per square foot on a roof:

- 10-12 inches of new snow
- 3-5 inches of packed/old snow
- 1 inch of ice.

How do we get our vehicles ready for winter?

Don't risk leaving your people stranded on the road in dangerous weather. Follow these tips when preparing vehicles for winter:

Consider changing to snow tires. Snow tires provide increased traction on snow and ice and are designed to perform better at low temperatures.

Test your batteries. Your batteries are more likely to fail in wintry weather, so check them before the cold sets in to be sure they're functioning at full capacity.

"If a key person isn't available, who is the backup person?"

Keep gas in your tank. Gas tanks are more likely to freeze when they're nearly empty, so make sure to keep them at least half full.

Maintain your tire pressure. Check pressure regularly so your vehicles can maintain optimal grip and performance.

Change your windshield wiper fluid. Wiper fluid that freezes to the windshield can be dangerous for drivers and passengers. Change to a fluid that won't freeze in cold temperatures, and regularly check your wipers, replacing those with any cracks and tears.

Be certain that your rear-window defrosters are working on all your organization's vehicles. Rear-window defrosters don't see much use during warm weather, so check to make sure they're ready to do their job when needed.

It's also a good practice to keep your organization's contact information up to date with your insurance providers. This helps them to serve you better, especially if they attempt to contact you before, during, or after a weather event.

Eric Spacek is assistant vice president, Risk Control, Church Mutual Insurance Company. Church Mutual (churchmutual.com) is committed to serving organizations that elevate the human condition and strengthen our communities.

Failing to Plan Is Planning to Fail

Be prepared for all the risks your organization faces, not only from weather and climate but the many hidden dangers from within. Here's more advice on protecting yourself, your stakeholders, and your organization as a whole (NonprofitWorld.org):

Six Ways to Reduce Risk & Comply with the Law (Vol. 25, No. 6)

Planning for the Unforeseeable (Vol. 24, No. 2)

Do You Need D&O/EPL Insurance? (Vol. 27, No. 3)

Risks Get Riskier for Nonprofits: ERM Can Help (Vol. 38, No. 1)

The Most Likely Lawsuits – and How to Protect Yourself (Vol. 19, No. 1)

Planning for the Quiet Disasters: Tech Mishaps (Vol. 40, No. 3)

Seven Risk Questions for the Board (Vol. 33, No. 4)

Get the Best Protection for Your Insurance Dollar (Vol. 24, No. 4)

Will You Be Ready When Disaster Strikes? (Vol. 18, No. 3)

Hurricanes, Strikes, Terrorism – Protect Your Events from These Causes of Loss (Vol. 28, No. 4)

Can Your Organization Afford to Lose $100,000? Safeguards Every Nonprofit Needs to Implement (Vol. 30, No. 3)

Reduce Legal Risks with These Pointers (Vol. 43, No. 2)

What Happens When Funders Truly Listen to Nonprofits

Recent conversations between nonprofits and grantmakers provide insights – and ideas to create meaningful change.

By Jordana Barrack

Philanthropy is facing new pressure today, stemming both from outside its network walls, and from within. This is triggering a moment of reflection – and it's an important one. For decades, traditional funding models have favored transactions over relationships, deliverables over people, and rigid outputs over real transformation. Meanwhile, nonprofits have been expected to shoulder the weight of solving our social and environmental problems – often with limited resources and increasing scrutiny. The strain is visible. The cracks are widening.

Nonprofit leaders aren't just responding to the demands of their mission – they're also carrying the emotional, logistical, and financial weight of leading under immense pressure. Yet, time and again, many continue to show up with remarkable resolve, rooted in a deep commitment to community, justice, and care. This kind of leadership deserves more than applause – it deserves structural support.

> "The cracks are widening."

At the Mighty Arrow Family Foundation (MAFF), we asked a question that kicked off a year of deep listening: *How do we, as funders, take better care of the people doing the work?* This question led to the Mighty Partner Project, a listening initiative designed to center the voices of nonprofit leaders, reflecting our belief that those closest to the problems often hold the most valuable insights about solutions. We don't pretend to know all the answers about what support looks like – so we're committed to keep asking, listening, and adapting.

What emerged from a year of dialogue were long-standing truths that nonprofit leaders have articulated for years – truths that funders and society at large have been slow to acknowledge.

"These pilots represent a shift in mindset."

What Nonprofit Leaders Shared

The conversations spanned 55 organizations and uncovered four key themes. Here is what's on the minds of nonprofit leaders:

1. The challenge of burnout is nearly universal, with 78% of nonprofit leaders reporting that burnout was either currently affecting their teams or was a serious concern. The need for rest and connection was clear – and so was the call for intentionality.

When structured well, convenings have the potential to rejuvenate, spark innovation, and foster collaboration. But without thoughtful design, they risk becoming another box to check for overextended teams. No wonder, then, that leaders in our program expressed a desire for gatherings that were flexible and strategic, not obligatory or draining.

2. Capacity constraint is a critical issue. Rising operational costs, limited access to general operating funds, and outdated funding cycles were cited as major barriers to organizational resilience. More than 95% of leaders indicated that short-term, restricted funding made it difficult to plan beyond the immediate future. The current philanthropic model often reinforces a scarcity mindset, with organizations forced to stretch themselves thin to meet funder expectations, rather than invest in their own sustainability.

3. There are large gaps in expertise. While many nonprofit teams are highly skilled, few have dedicated in-house resources for areas like HR, legal, tax, or finance. These gaps not only slow down progress but also hinder innovation and long-term growth. Leaders named specific investments that could accelerate impact – such as team retreats, strategic planning, leadership development, and infrastructure upgrades – but those needs are often deprioritized when resources are tied to project-specific outcomes.

4. There's a clear call for investment in people, not just programs. At the core of every nonprofit is a group of individuals committed to creating change, often at personal cost. These leaders are the architects of impact, yet they're frequently overlooked in favor of metrics and milestones. Sustainable change, as we came to understand, can't happen without sustained care for the people leading it.

Moving from Listening to Action

Our commitment to shifting how we support our partners led to the development of two new pilot initiatives:

The Nurturing Leadership Grant is designed to provide existing partners with flexible funding to support staff well-being, leadership development, and organizational health. This includes funding for mental-health resources, professional coaching, strategic retreats, and initiatives that create space for connection and renewal.

The Transformational Capacity Grant invites current partners to refer emerging organizations for funding. By removing traditional application barriers and letting trusted grantees nominate peers, this program broadens access and amplifies networks of care and collaboration.

These pilots are more than new funding vehicles; they represent a shift in mindset. They aim to redistribute power, trust nonprofit leaders as experts in their own needs, and challenge the assumption that grantmaking capital inherently carries superior wisdom. Through these programs, we hope to foster a culture of funding that is adaptive, responsive, and rooted in relationship.

Reimagining Support across the Sector

The implications of this work go beyond any one foundation or grant cycle. They point to a deeper truth: Nonprofit leaders aren't asking for charity – they're asking for partnership. They're asking for structures that recognize the full humanity and expertise of those doing the work.

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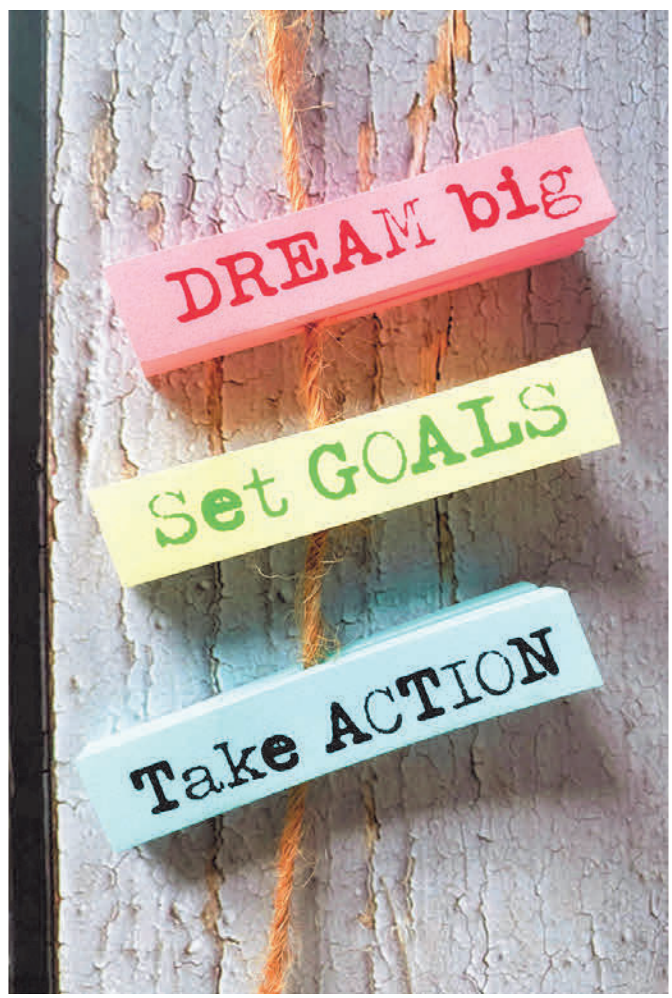


What if support systems were built around abundance, care, and mutual accountability? What if trust-based relationships became the default, not the exception? Nonprofit leaders have long been asking such questions and reimagining what's possible. Within the nonprofit sector lies extraordinary capacity to create systemic change. But this potential is often constrained by funding models that prioritize control over collaboration and oversight over trust. Traditional grantmaking practices, while well-intentioned, frequently replicate the very dynamics of inequity that the nonprofit sector exists to address.

The call here isn't just for funders to change – it's for a sector-wide realignment. The stories and strategies shared through the Mighty Partner Project show that the path forward already exists. It has been shaped by lived experience, tested under pressure, and grounded in community wisdom.

But the shift toward shared power requires more than vision. It requires funding structures that are flexible, long-term, and responsive. It also requires funders and nonprofits alike to challenge the assumption that impact is best measured in quarterly outcomes rather than human capacity and long-term relationship building. We can be entrepreneurial, together. We can build plans for this.

Continuing the Conversation

This journey is far from complete: We at the Mighty Arrow Family Foundation are committed to an ongoing dialogue. The lessons learned will inform how we at the foundation give, partner, and show up for the people and movements we support. The nonprofit leaders who contributed to this project offered not only feedback but a vision for what more equitable and sustainable support could look like. Their leadership continues to inspire the foundation's next steps – and offers a powerful blueprint for others ready to follow suit.

This work is rooted in humility, but also in conviction. Nonprofits, businesses, and public institutions must work together to address deep-seated challenges. But collaboration can't happen without trust, and trust can't thrive without listening. The path forward may be complex, but the principles are simple: Listen deeply, invest boldly, and trust the people closest to the work.

Because behind every movement, every strategy, and every metric, are people. And when those people feel supported, they can change the world.

Jordana Barrack is the executive director of the Mighty Arrow Family Foundation (mightyarrow.org). Committed to its cause and infused with an entrepreneurial spirit, Mighty Arrow invests in solutions that take action on climate change, amplify our human power, protect the ecosystems we call home, and build a more vibrant future – for everyone.

Lead On!

You'll find more wisdom and advice in the resources available at NonprofitWorld.org:

The Challenge of Sustaining a Grant-Funded Program (Vol. 28, No. 6)

The Strategic Alliance Journey: Forging Outrageously Successful Relationships (Vol. 28, No. 3)

Focusing on Foundation Grants: The Powerful Reverse Needs Assessment Vol. 12, No. 4)

How to Measure Fundraising Success (Vol. 31, No. 2)

Determining the Value of Your Collaborations (Vol. 33, No. 4)

Seven Deadly Grantwriting Sins (Vol. 27, No. 6)

Nonprofits & Funders: Two Sides of the Same Coin? (Vol. 24, No. 4)

Grounded Visioning: A Quick Way to Create Shared Visions (Vol. 26, No. 4)

Dealing with Change in A VUCA World (Vol. 37, No. 4)

How Much? Five Factors to Consider When Choosing a Grant Request Size (Vol. 31, No. 3)

Think Out of the Box for Fundraising Gains (Vol. 29, No. 5)

Dynamic Retreats: What Nonprofit CEOs Need to Know (Vol. 42, No. 3)

How to Answer the Dreaded Grant Question about Future Funding (Vol. 31, No. 1)

Fostering Organizational Resilience (Vol. 39, No. 3)

The Joys of Risk (Vol. 28, No. 3)

Pitfalls to Avoid when Seeking Corporate Support (Vol. 34, No. 4)

Grant Writers' Other Role (Vol. 18, No. 4)

A Path to Stronger Programs, Greater Engagement, *and* Less Burnout? (Vol. 36, No. 1)

Two Keys to Successful Grant Proposals (Vol. 15, No. 3)

Encourage Everyone to Be a Leader

It's when everybody leads that the toughest problems get solved.

Reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

When Everyone Leads. *By Ed O'Malley & Julia Fabris McBride. Bard Press, bardpress.com.*

When we think of nonprofit leadership, we usually limit ourselves to historic definitions rooted in the hierarchical tendencies of other sectors. Nonprofit organizations, however, are too complex for such models. They're accountable to communities through their stated purposes – working on issues of commonality in manageable slices – such as offering food pantry services, enhancing artistic expression, strengthening families and social groups, improving individual health, or protecting the civil rights of certain populations.

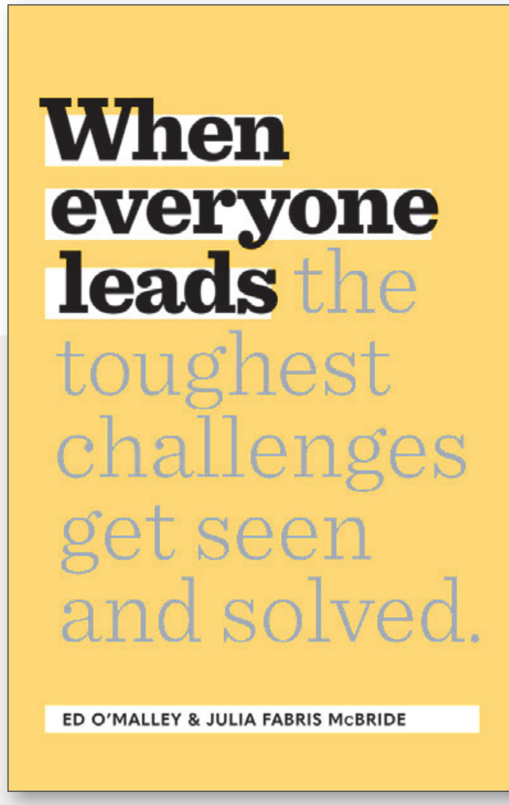
While this book is intended to improve leadership in all sectors, it's easy to believe the authors are writing directly to nonprofit organizations operating in a complex environment. It's in the nonprofit sector that everyone most clearly has the opportunity to practice leadership.

Recognizing the ability of everyone to participate in leadership is what democracy is all about. Leadership means working collectively and interchangeably to make progress on important challenges. It will often be experimental, risky, and certainly adaptive. It's frequently (and perhaps commonly) episodic as we meet with new loss, gain new knowledge, or face new opportunities.

Leadership involves a shift from expecting to know the solutions to exploring diverse interpretations. This means stepping out of our comfort zones of seeking simple answers.

Nonprofit organizations want to improve people's lives, whether that means mitigating (or even eliminating) poverty, integrating science into daily life, exposing people to diverse cultural endeavors, creating regenerative workplaces, or any of a myriad of ways to make people more informed, interdependent, and happy. Collectively, everyone can lead; democratically, we see the opportunities and the obligations to help people do so. This book explores how and what we can do to promote leadership as a communal activity.

> "This means stepping out of our comfort zones."



Let These Principles Guide Your Way

Here are a few of the fundamentals explored in *When Everyone Leads*:

Leadership is an activity, not a position. Leadership and authority are two different things. Leadership is mobilizing others to solve challenges. Authority is more like management. Authority alone isn't sufficient to make progress on the things that matter most.

Leadership starts with you and must engage others. As a culture, we've fallen into the habit of waiting for others to lead. Action is yours to take, and the time is now. No matter your position, age, or level of experience, you can take action to engage other people.

Leadership always starts with dissatisfaction. People don't exercise leadership unless they see a gap between the current reality and a desired future. The first step toward action is to assess reality and see what changes are needed. Then think about the future and how you would like it to be.

Terrence Fernsler, MNPL, PhD, has been a nonprofit professional for over 40 years. He is currently an instructor and advisor in the James Madison University Nonprofit Studies minor program, and instructor in Nonprofit Management and Leadership for the Master of Public Administration program in the Bush School of Government and Policy's Center for Nonprofits and Philanthropy at Texas A&M University.

Use Design Thinking to Solve Worrisome Problems

This step-by-step approach to problem-solving yields amazing results.

By Katharine Nesslage

Some of our important choices have a timeline. If we delay a decision, the opportunity is gone forever. Sometimes our doubts keep us from making a choice that involves change. Thus, an opportunity may be missed.

— James E. Faust

Many nonprofits begin decision-making with a thought process inspired by the question: What could go wrong? Truly successful nonprofits look deeper and dream big about creating new visions that will change the world. Imagine, for examine, if the March of Dimes had stopped looking for ways to change the world once they fulfilled their first goal of getting a polio vaccine licensed for use in 1955.

Nonprofit leaders can take a cue from design thinking to adapt their processes to the evolving environment. Design thinking is a visual, iterative approach to ascertaining human needs and finding solutions. It's a quick-fire numbers game.

At a recent session on design thinking, we were each asked to find a partner and uncover solutions to the gift-giving process. We interviewed our partners to tap into the emotional driver behind giving, using design thinking as our guide. Keep in mind that design thinking shouldn't be too complicated – or too simple (such as a clever checklist that's filed away and never used).

In the beginning of the design-thinking session, we all struggled to get beyond the surface issues. But as we plugged away, insights were revealed.

"This is the time to color outside the lines."

Design Thinking in a Nutshell

During the hour-long session, we learned that design thinking can be achieved in short increments, as follows:

1. Gain an empathetic understanding of the problem you're trying to solve. Interview stakeholders to understand their experiences and motivations. Observe non-verbal clues, and practice active listening. Focus on what the person is saying. Remember to do the following:

Show that you're listening (by nodding, using an open posture, and the like).

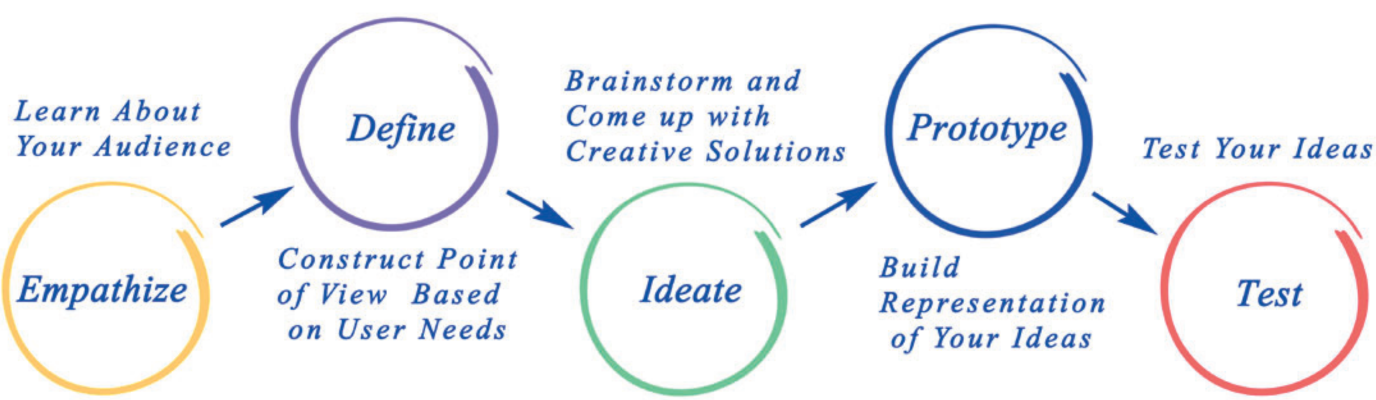
Provide feedback ("Sounds like you're saying. . . .").

Resist the urge to interrupt with counter-arguments.

Respond candidly and respectfully.

Ask open-ended questions. Your goal is to hear stories about the experience. Follow up after hearing the stories and ask why: What's the reason things are being handled this way?

2. Define or reframe the problem based on what you've learned during the empathic stage. What are the goals and wishes of the stakeholders? What are they trying to achieve? Craft a problem statement that captures your reframe. For example:



"[Stakeholder] needs a way to [need revealed from empathizing phase] because . . . but, surprisingly . . . [insights]."

Questions to ask yourself include:

What new things did you discover about the stakeholders' feelings and motivations? Think back to any stories that were shared.

What do you see about the stakeholders' experiences that maybe they don't see? It's okay to create insights based on your inferences.

Always take time to reflect on what you heard. Then dig a little deeper in another round of interviewing. Ask questions to get clarity on what you heard. Ask who, what, when, where, why, and how.

For example, if the organization's reputation is a concern, ask where the stakeholder perceives the risk (for example, tweets of outside influencers, staff activities at conferences, and so on). Be a sponge. Soak up and record as much information as possible about the conversation so you can review your thoughts later.

3. Generate ideas based on what you observed, analyzed, and synthesized. This is the time to color outside the lines. Don't let yourself be limited by time, money, or resources.

Sketch or write down at least five radical solutions to meet the needs you observed. This is a list-making exercise with no self-judgment and works best if you sketch the ideas. If art isn't your strong suit, use stick figures to draw at least five ideas. Jot down the human-centered problem statement or point-of-view statement you discovered earlier.

Once you've generated ideas, share them with the stakeholders. You can show them the drawings or simply explain your ideas.

Capture stakeholder feedback and listen for people's emotions, worries, and criticism. Designers know that criticism – often overlooked in design thinking – is an integral part of the creative process. Initial feedback on preliminary concepts will unearth even more creative ways of looking at the issue.

4. Prototype and test a real-life solution. Think back to all you uncovered in the process of generating, developing, and communicating new ideas, plus the feedback you received from stakeholders.

> "Sketch or write down at least five radical solutions."

> "Criticism is important to make the solution better."

Take one of the ideas and think about the possible people, processes, and systems needed to bring it to life. Ponder what needs to happen to make the idea feasible.

This is where you create a low-cost prototype of the solution. Ask staff to report back on what worked and what didn't work, ideas for improvements, or any potential risks that arose during the testing.

Again, constructive criticism is important to make the solution better. Also, keep in mind that solutions can't be static, because problems don't behave; they morph and change based on factors within and completely outside your control.

Great Learning Comes in Small Packages

Try design thinking in small increments. Try an hour-long session, digest the human needs that you discover, reflect on opportunities that surface, and set a goal to repeat the process.

Design thinking is a great tool for moving outside familiar and comforting boundaries. It's also a way to inject much-needed creativity into solving the tricky problems that face your organization.

Katharine Nesslage is a project manager at the Nonprofit Risk Management Center (nonprofitrisk.org). She welcomes your questions and feedback (katharine@nonprofitrisk.org).

Continue Your Creative Journey

Be inspired by the thought leaders and authors of these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Say Yes to Solving the Problem (Vol. 39, No. 2)

The Risk of Regret: Make Sure Your Mission Really Lives (Vol. 42, No. 4)

Be a Better Leader by Being a Careful Listener (Vol. 37, No. 1)

Creating Breakthroughs (Vol. 26, No. 4)

Fear & Memory (Vol. 38, No. 4)

Outside the Comfort Zone (Vol. 25, No. 3)

The Two Missing Parts of Team-Building (Vol. 41, No. 1)

Thinking about Thinking (Vol. 26, No. 3)

To Make an Impact, Improve Your Non-Verbal Awareness (Vol. 38, No. 3)

Seven Ways to Be Unreasonable (Vol. 20, No. 5)

Listen Your Way to Major Gifts: Power Questions Your Donors Will Love (Vol. 39, No. 3)

Secrets to Becoming More Productive

Embrace the secrets at the heart of every productivity system.

By Karin Hurt

Your to-do list can feel overwhelming. Leadership means a continual stream of information, problems, decisions, and interruptions. It can seem like you'll never get ahead.

There are three mindsets that will help:

1. Realize That the Need Is Infinite.

There really is more on your to-do list than you can possibly get done. The question is: What do you do with that knowledge? Does it stress and paralyze you?

If so, the problem isn't with your list. It's with your perspective. When you're feeling anxious, you're letting your choices overwhelm you. When you're relaxed, there are still a thousand things you could be doing – you're just not stressing about them.

To turn the problem into power, embrace the fact that you can't possibly do everything. You never could and you never will. The list is always infinite. When you surrender the unrealistic hope that the list will somehow go away and acknowledge that it's always there, always has been, and always will be, it frees you to focus.

2. Understand Your Limits.

The second mindset shift that will help you be more productive is the understanding that you can do only one thing at a time. It's another tough reality: From your long list, you get to choose one task. That's it. One. Finish that one. Or move it forward as much as you can, then move to the next.

So how do you choose what to do? That's the third secret.

3. Mind the M.I.T.

When choosing what to do next, ask yourself this question: What's your M.I.T. (Most Important Thing)? Today, what is the most important thing you will do? This year, what will be the the most important strategic outcome your team will achieve? What are the two or three critical behaviors that will produce the best outcomes?

As a productive leader, your M.I.T. often shifts from day to day. Today, it may be to clarify your strategy for the

> “The problem isn’t with your list. It’s with your perspective.”

year. Tomorrow, it may be to address an underperforming team member. The next day, your M.I.T. may be to have a coaching conversation or work with colleagues to align your M.I.T. with theirs. It may be to ensure you finish what you’ve started.

“Mind the M.I.T.” means that you know what’s most important and do it first. Do it before the inevitable rush of interruptions, problems, and fire drills.

It takes self-awareness and confidence to acknowledge that today’s M.I.T. might be a walk in the woods or time with loved ones. It takes determination to ignore what’s easy and do what matters most. When you focus on your daily M.I.T., help your team understand the strategic M.I.T., and know their daily M.I.T. behaviors, you will unleash your team’s energy and transform your results.

Karin Hurt is the founder of Let’s Grow Leaders (letsgrowleaders.com), She helps leaders around the world achieve breakthrough results and is the award-winning author of numerous books.

Simple? Yes. Easy? Not Always.

It can be tricky to focus on the behaviors that will make the most difference for you, your team, and the results you want to achieve. Glean insights from these articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Never Enough Time (Vol. 26, No. 5)

What to Do Next (Vol. 24, No. 1)

How Changing Your Lenses Will Strengthen Your Leadership (Vol. 34, No. 3)

Too Much to Do: Four Keys to Effective Delegating (Vol. 26, No. 1)

Accomplish More by Climbing the Productivity Pyramid (Vol. 36, No. 3)

How to Get It Done (Vol. 25, No. 6)

Moments Matter: A Three-Part Strategy to Leverage Your Time (Vol. 40, No. 1)

> “Embrace the fact that you can’t possibly do everything.”

NEW!

CALLING ALL AUTHORS!

If you’ve written a book and would like to be featured in *Nonprofit World*’s “Author’s Spotlight” (a new feature starting next year), please e-mail the following to muehrcke@charter.net:

- **your headshot***
- **copy of the cover of your book***
- **book title and a 125-word description of your book****
- **brief bio****

*** png or jpeg format**

**** Word format**

Coming Up in *Nonprofit World*

- Don’t Let These Threats Derail Your Project
- The Most Neglected Act of Innovation
- How SMS & Other Smart Tech Tools Can Boost Your Success
- Avoid These Communication Blunders
- Use Financial Statements to Tell Your Story
- Are You Using Your Executive Committee Correctly?
- The Number-One Fundraising Skill You Need
- Best Practices to Cure Board-Meeting Burnout
- Background Checks: What You Need to Know
- How to Live in Dark Times

Plus much more!

A Tool to Prioritize Opportunities

Get your priorities straight with this useful tool.

By David Chinsky

Every day, you need to sort through an often bewildering array of opportunities. It's easy to fall prey to the idea that everything is "priority one." The problem is that if everything is priority one, then *nothing* is priority one.

The Opportunity Board, a tool best used every 90 days, will help you organize your priorities. Use the following steps to assure you're focusing on the most promising options.

> "If everything is priority one, then *nothing* is priority one."

Step 1: Pinpoint Opportunities.

First, identify all the potential opportunities you might pursue in the next 90 days. These can be your own personal opportunities, your team's opportunities, or organization-wide opportunities.

This list needn't include your daily tasks or to-do's. Rather, you're looking for the bigger projects you might undertake in the next calendar quarter to move you and your organization toward your goals.

Your list can be a mix of short- and long-term projects. You aren't just looking for opportunities you can complete in 90 days. You're looking for projects that need to be started in the next 90 days even if you need to continue working on them into successive 90-day periods. This is important to remember so that you don't list only low-hanging fruit on your Opportunity Board. There are always going to be opportunities that will take longer than 90 days to finish, and if you exclude them from your list, you'll likely never start working on them.

Step 2: Sort These Opportunities into Four Circles.

Work with your team to place each of the opportunities you identified into one of four concentric circles:

Bulls-eye opportunities align with one or more of your organization's key strategies. They rise to the top of your list of opportunities to pursue in the next 90 days. When

> **The Opportunity Board is a tool best used every 90 days.**

executed properly, these opportunities will result in great benefits for your organization.

In-the-ballpark opportunities are close enough to your "bulls-eye" to warrant your attention and evaluation. While not necessarily in your "sweet spot," these opportunities deserve your serious consideration after you've completed opportunities in the "bulls-eye" of your Opportunity Board.

Opportunistic-focused opportunities sometimes come only once in a lifetime and may trump an opportunity in the "bulls-eye" or "in-the-ballpark" sections of your Opportunity Board. Other opportunities placed in this portion of your Opportunity Board are opportunities you can't begin before securing the funding, additional staffing, or other resources necessary to begin the project.

Off-the-board opportunities are the last opportunities you might pursue while you work through the other three areas of the Opportunity Board. Keep these possibilities on your list so you don't forget them. They're your "someday-maybe" opportunities.

Put Your Results to Good Use.

The Opportunity Board has many uses. For example:

Use the Opportunity Board as a personal planning tool to organize your own opportunities into the various sections of the Board.

Have a leadership team use the Opportunity Board to check for alignment. If each member of the leadership team completes an Opportunity Board and presents it to the group, team members can see where their priorities differ. Using this information, the team can create a collective agenda and come together around a common set of priorities.

Use the Opportunity Board at strategic-planning retreats. It's the perfect tool to help people sort through options and decide where to focus their planning efforts.

How will you use the Opportunity Board to prioritize ideas competing for your attention? A world of possibilities awaits you.

Dr. David Chinsky is the founder of the Institute for Leadership Fitness (FitLeadersAcademy.com) and author of The Fit Leader's Companion: A Down-to-Earth Guide for Sustainable Leadership Success. *He focuses on preparing leaders to achieve their highest level of effectiveness and leadership fitness.*

10 Questions for Leadership Success

In his excellent book *The Fit Leader's Companion*, David Chinsky lists questions that will help you make the best decisions, choose the right priorities, and communicate effectively with your staff, board, donors, and other stakeholders. Asking yourself these questions will make you a better leader:

1. How could providing a list of expectations to your team help them stay on track?

2. What are the visible signs that others truly understand your message?

3. How do you track donors' issues to create a sense of urgency around your organization's agenda?

4. What is currently distracting you from focus on your main objectives?

5. How can you replace closed-ended questions (that often serve as poorly disguised statements of your own position) with powerful open-ended questions?

6. How much time do you spend just walking around the office and talking casually with staff members?

7. Is there enough space for reflection in your weekly schedule?

8. How do you keep track of – and provide feedback on – people's positive accomplishments?

9. What key opportunities are "in the bulls-eye" based on market need and organizational strategy?

10. How do you demonstrate your genuine curiosity and interest in others' thoughts and ideas?

Don't Miss Your Best Opportunity

Learn more about prioritizing, focusing, and choosing the best path (NonprofitWorld.org):

The Ben Franklin Program for Focusing on What's Important (Vol. 29, No. 1)

Grounded Visioning: A Quick Way to Create Shared Visions (Vol. 26, No. 4)

Do You Know Where Your Goals Are? (Vol. 26, No. 5)

Creating a Values-Based Road Map (Vol. 23, No. 2)

Opportunity's Knocking: Are You Ready? (Vol. 16, No. 5)

Inner Leadership: Mental Strategies (Vol. 18, No. 3)

What Not to Do and How Not to Do It (Vol. 19, No. 6)

Top Tips to Lift Your Leadership (Vol. 38, No. 2)

Better Delegation = Better Leadership (Vol. 37, No. 3)

The Five Essentials for Workplace Wellness

A forward-looking organization shares the keys to creating a culture of well-being.

By Amy Faus & Jan Schlaier

Every nonprofit has to deal with burnout and compassion fatigue in its workforce. Those that put a priority on wellness are the most likely to reduce turnover and keep loyal, committed workers. One organization that imagines its workplace as an engine of well-being is Bergen's Promise, which has developed initiatives to encourage positive health behaviors in the workplace.* Here's a description of their framework, as outlined by the U.S. Surgeon General, along with details on how the organization uses these principles – and how you can do the same – to create a culture of wellness and well-being:

1. Protection from Harm

The first of the well-being principles focuses on keeping workers safe and healthy. The U.S. Surgeon General pinpoints these key actions:

Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety.

Enable adequate rest for all employees. If you must ask them to work overtime, give them commensurate time off to rest and recharge.

Normalize and support mental health.

Operationalize DEIA norms, policies, and programs. DEIA stands for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. It refers to ensuring fairness for all stakeholders.

How they do it: Bergen's Promise's health and safety committee is a cornerstone of the organization's structure. Infection control and safety screening questionnaires have been instituted to protect staff in the field. Workers are encouraged to use sick time as needed to care for themselves and protect their colleagues and clients. The organization highlights the importance of employee health and safety through its observance of OSHA's Safe and Sound Week, providing education and resources to remind staff of the value of their health in the workplace. Weekly walks and the annual employee wellness fair serve as opportunities for people to relax, reset, and prioritize their own health.

> "Help employees relax, reset, and prioritize their own health."

2. Connection & Community

The second essential in the Surgeon General's model spotlights these measures:

Create cultures of inclusion and belonging.

Cultivate trusted relationships.

Foster collaboration and teamwork.

How they do it: Bergen's Promise offers events showing appreciation for staff and encouraging social-emotional support, including food-truck lunches during periods of high work demand, an annual potluck celebrating staff members' cultural backgrounds, an employee appreciation picnic, a video chat dedicated to employee-generated wellness ideas and support, trainings on secondary trauma, and an internal television broadcast celebrating office camaraderie. Teams in the organization are given a quarterly stipend for a team-building outing.

3. Work-Life Harmony

In the third wellness principle, the Surgeon General encourages these approaches:

Provide autonomy over how work is done.

Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible.

Increase access to paid leave.

Respect boundaries between work and non-work time.

How they do it: Bergen's Promise maintains an on-call system that allows staff to truly sign off during non-work time while ensuring client needs are met. Bergen's Promise also offers generous paid time off, beginning with three weeks of vacation and increasing to up to five weeks per year based on employee longevity, in addition to paid sick time, 14 paid holidays, and four personal days per year. Staff are encouraged to use the paid time off to maintain work-life harmony and restoration. Staff do occasionally need to

*Bergen's Promise is the designated Care Management Organization for Bergen County, New Jersey. The nonprofit serves over 1,800 youth with mental and behavioral health challenges, substance use issues, and developmental disabilities. Bergen's Promise provides support to keep these young people safe and stable at home and in their communities.

> **Seek employee-generated wellness ideas.**

work outside of normal business hours to meet the needs of the families they serve but are provided with autonomy and flexibility to adjust their other hours throughout the week to maintain a 35-40-hour work week.

4. Mattering at Work

The fundamental need for people to matter at work zeroes in on these goals:

Provide a living wage.

Engage workers in workplace decisions.

Build a culture of gratitude and recognition.

Connect individual work with organizational mission.

How they do it: Bergen's Promise defines its staff members as one of three core pillars of its strategic plan. This is reflected in staff training and initiatives that promote self-affirmation and peer-recognition, positive communication, and self-care. Team members are asked to reflect on how their personal goals relate to the organization's values and mission. Members of upper management play an instrumental role by getting to know workers on an individual level, reinforcing the value of each team member to the organization's mission.

5. Opportunity for Growth

The fifth essential to workplace well-bring in the Surgeon General's model sets out these steps:

Offer quality training, education, and mentoring.

Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement.

Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback.

How they do it: The commitment to people's growth at Bergen's Promise is reflected in professional development in the form of training and mentorship opportunities. Staff who express interest are given formal mentorship and skill-building opportunities to help them achieve career advancement goals. Supervisory staff receive additional training on how to support and develop their team members.

Amy Faus (afaus@bergenspromise.org), MPH, CPH (Certified in Public Health), MCHES® (Master Certified Health Education Specialist) is the health promotion manager at Bergen's Promise. She has over a decade of experience in public health education and health promotion. Jan Schlaier (jschlaier@bergenspromise.org), MS, FNP-BC, Ed.D(c) is the director of health services at Bergen's Promise. She is a practicing nurse practitioner with over 40 years of experience in the field.

Health, Happiness, & Well-Being

Wellness is threaded throughout the culture of Bergen's Promise and can be seen in the blossoming of informal peer support networks and grassroots conversations about health and well-being. The Surgeon General's "Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being" ring true in the experience of Bergen's Promise, which encourages other nonprofits to consider the model as they attract and retain a strong, healthy workforce. Your organization can build the scaffolding for such a culture and educate your staff on ways to enhance their well-being by perusing articles available at NonprofitWorld.org. Begin here:

Practices to Help You Thrive in Challenging Times (Vol. 39, No. 4)

Bring Yourself Fully to Your Nonprofit Role (Vol. 41, No. 1)

Employee Feedback Is No Longer Optional (Vol. 39, No. 1)

How to Tap into Purpose to Motivate People (Vol. 38, No. 2)

A Path to Stronger Programs, Greater Engagement, *and* Less Burnout? (Vol. 36, No. 1)

Build a Winning Workplace Culture (Vol. 39, No. 3)

Strategies to Reboot & Refresh (Vol. 41, No. 3)

Embrace Mindfulness as a Leadership Practice (Vol. 36, No. 2)

The Overwhelmed Office: Six Fixes for the Stressed-Out, Productivity-Challenged Workplace (Vol. 28, No. 4)

Find the Glue that Binds Your Team (Vol. 40, No. 4)

Ergonomics: What Does It Mean for You? (Vol. 31, No. 5)

Vacation Time: More than an Administrative Matter (Vol. 24, No. 2)

Manage for Today, Mentor for Tomorrow (Vol. 23, No. 5)

Are Your Training Goals in Alignment? Four Keys (Vol. 39, No. 2)

Workplace Environments & How They Influence Productivity (Vol. 42, No. 2)

Smart Daily Habits Will Make You A Better Leader

The smartest coaches in the country describe the practices that work best. You may be surprised at the simple genius they embody.

By Ed Krow

There's a lot to be said for having a consistent daily routine. Many leaders try to create good habits to help them stay on task. But sometimes the most beneficial daily practices are ones you might not instinctively think to do.

We asked a panel of Forbes Coaches to share the surprising daily habits that have helped their coaching clients thrive as leaders. Whether you're looking to shake up your existing routine or create a new one, it's worth experimenting with some of these habits to find the right fit for you.

Take 20-Minute Technology Breaks. It shouldn't be surprising that as a leader you're often bombarded. Checking your phone becomes compulsive and you become "busy." Use the do-not-disturb option on your phone, and use the undisturbed time to talk to your team, walk around the office, or get outside. Just a few of these short breaks will renew you and give you a fresh perspective. – Maresa Friedman, Executive Cat Herder

Read. We need to continually take in new information to open our minds to new ideas and ways of thinking. Good leaders are willing to take in differing opinions and consider their merit. Furthermore, leaders who read make notes on the ideas that strike them. Even if it's not something they can use at the present time, they'll keep the information for when the time is right. – Ed Krow, Turbo Execs, LLC

> "These surprising daily habits help people thrive as leaders."

Make A Daily Pen-And-Paper To-Do List. Nothing enables daily success as much as feeling you're on top of your work. Go "old school" by leveraging the power of a daily paper planner versus an electronic to-do list to set daily priorities and focus. A few minutes with it at the start and the end of each day makes a difference. – Ann Farrell, Quantum Endeavors, Inc.

Write In A Daily "Pain" Journal. The greatest growth occurs when we identify the experiences that trigger our sadness or anger, finding patterns in those experiences and working to respond to those scenarios differently. By tracking the action, environment, and people involved, you can feel empowered, knowing that you're designing an

> "Use the do-not-disturb option on your phone."

emotionally intelligent way to respond and engaging more deeply with those around you. – Michael S. Seaver, Seaver Consulting, LLC

Take Small Steps toward Goals. The most productive leaders excel at prioritization toward a goal. Many find that setting long-term goals broken into achievable milestones is the way to achieve success. By setting weekly and daily targets toward a goal, it's easier to plan and obtain each objective. Daily reflection allows you to prioritize and focus your energies wisely while shedding distractions. – Erin Urban, UPPSolutions, LLC

Wake Up One Hour Earlier. Waking up just one hour earlier each day will give you an extra 21 hours a month of productivity to stay caught up or clear your calendar for other obligations. – Ben Newman, The Ben Newman Companies

Have a Vibrant Life Outside Of Work. Being a leader carries a high level of pressure and responsibility. The best way to thrive as a leader is to ensure you keep critical outlets alive. Being busy is the worst time to let outside activities – hobbies, sports, exercise, learning – go, yet this is the sacrifice many people make. When you have outside balance, you can bring continued passion to work with you. – Laura DeCarlo, Career Directors International

Carve Out Time to Think. "Carving out" time means booking a meeting with yourself by putting it on your calendar so you won't overlook it. Use that meeting-with-self to catch up on current research and think about upcoming projects with a focus not on implementation but on how those projects fit into the organization's overall mission and vision. – Tonya Echols, Thrive Coaching Solutions

Schedule Buffer Time between Meetings. Busy executives go from meeting to presentation to meeting, looking frazzled and sounding disconnected. The successful ones schedule a buffer between each meeting and are more deliberate about what they'll say and how they will say it to influence their audience. Their assistants know to accept 45-minute rather than 60-minute meetings to guarantee a 15-minute buffer. – Shoma Chatterjee Hayden, ghSMART

Create and Stick to a Morning Routine that Works For You. Successful leaders do something that most unsuccessful leaders don't. They have a routine for success. They start their day with a routine that works. For example, you might begin your day by working out or meditating to set your mind for the rest of the day. Do something that serves you and brings out the hero in you. – Stephanie Vaughan, One Source Coaching

Let Unscheduled Phone Calls Go to Voicemail. Unscheduled phone calls can be the biggest disruptors of your day, breaking your productivity flow. Let people leave a message. Plan time to listen to these messages later. Then respond during a scheduled time, unless it's an emergency. – LaKesha Womack, Womack Consulting Group

Change Up Your Commute Every Day. Take a different way to and from the office each day. Doing so forces you out of your comfort zone and changes your perspective. You might even find something new and exciting on your adventure. – Sharon Sayler, Competitive Edge Communications

Spend One-On-One Time with Each Team Member. Spending time with individual team members is the most time-tested style of successful leadership. It could be as simple as having a cup of coffee and listening to the person. – Kamyar Shah, World Consulting Group

Take Time to Be Thankful. One of the simplest yet most overlooked habits that lead to greater success is reflecting on the things that make you grateful. As little as five minutes each day lowers anxiety, improves focus, and roots in your present success as a starting point for what you need to tackle during the day. Gratitude makes daily challenges a little more bearable. – Billy Williams, Archegos

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Ed Krow (edkrow.com) has years of experience as an HR strategist. He works with executives who are struggling with people problems, such as adapting to changing conditions and expectations. He turns irrelevant and ineffective HR functions into strategic contributors by aligning HR with an organization's objectives. This article originally appeared on Forbes.com.

Ways to Enhance Your Leadership

Gain new perspectives on being the best leader possible with articles at NonprofitWorld.org:

Be a Better Leader by Being a Careful Listener (Vol. 37, No. 1)

Not Taught in Business Schools: How to Cultivate Creative Leading (Vol. 24, No. 5)

12 Heuristics that Will Raise Your EQ (Vol. 26, No. 4)

The Nonprofit Executive as Chief Learning Officer (Vol. 16, No. 2)

Use Coaching to Retain the Leader's Edge (Vol. 28, No. 2)

Intuition in Decision-Making (Vol. 25, No. 4)

Embrace Mindfulness as a Leadership Practice (Vol. 36, No. 2)

Practices to Help You Thrive in Challenging Times (Vol. 39, No. 4)

Bring Yourself Fully to Your Nonprofit Role (Vol. 41, No. 1)

Thriving Through Turbulence: Your Guide to Mastering Challenges

You can overcome your toughest pressures with these smart tactics and adaptable solutions.

By Ken McGivney

Uncertainty is the byword for the times. Let's look at the greatest challenges you're facing along with strategies to handle them.

Manage Rising Insurance Costs

Insurance prices have been on the rise since the pandemic, a lagging indicator of the stress and inflationary pressure of the economy during that time. As a result, premiums have spiked with double-digit percentage increases on an annual basis, causing providers to search for alternatives. Many providers are now facing the possibility of discontinued coverage altogether, as they've been subjected to legal claims related to Child Victim Acts due to legislative changes in several states. Here's what you can do:

Strategize with insurance counsels to either increase deductibles to lower premiums or to look for the potential of a Captive Insurance Model. If trends continue, working with state agencies to establish risk pools should no longer be merely a hypothetical strategy but a now-necessary approach.

Band together with other leaders to advocate for state indemnification of certain claims, establishment of Victims Funds to address the high numbers of claims, and, of course, continued increases of funding to address rising insurance and administrative costs.

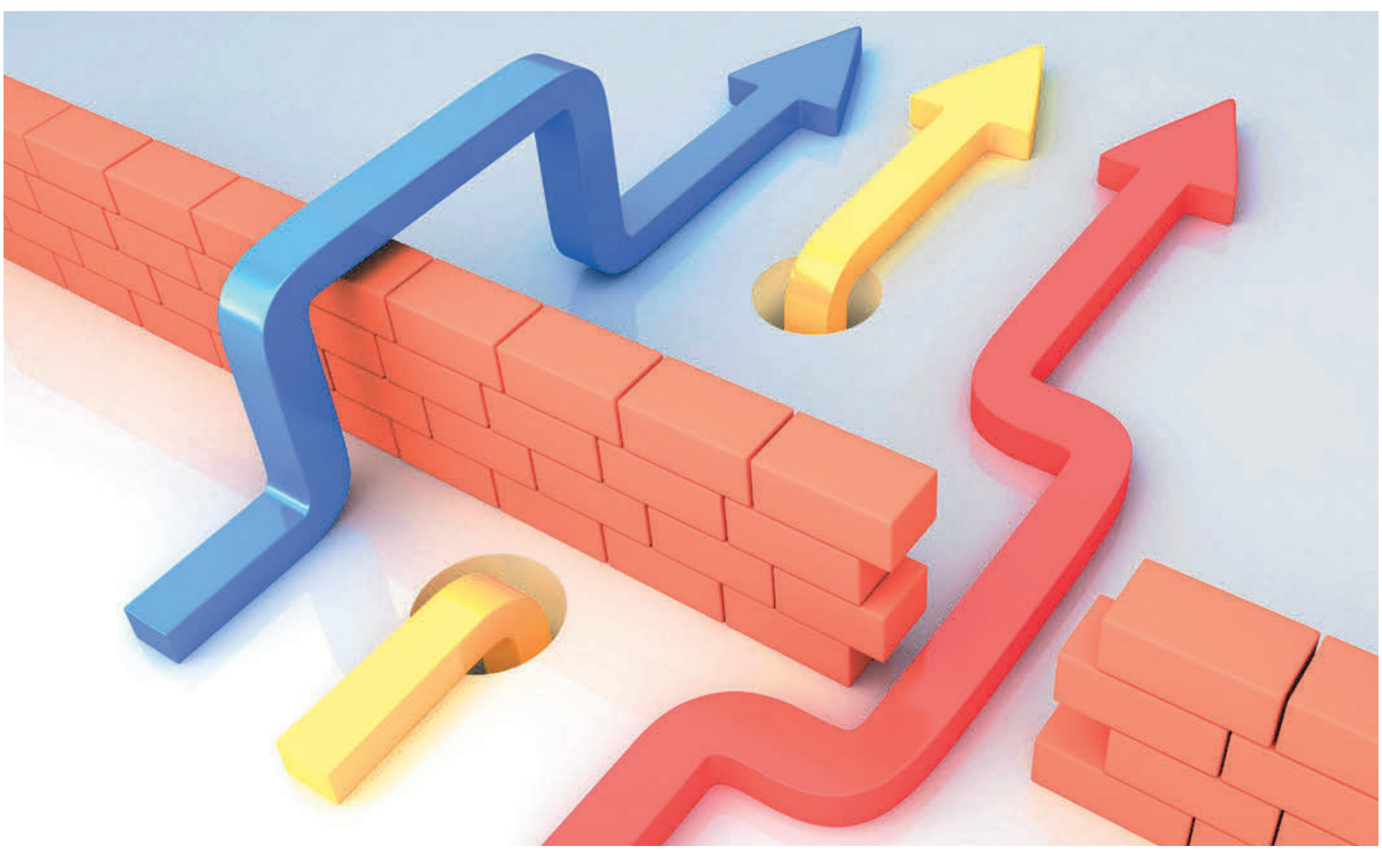
Plan for Funding Reductions

Monitor the sources of your revenue streams, and assess the amount of funding at risk.

Perform risk assessments to determine how funding losses could impact staffing patterns and absorption of administrative costs. Create likely "what if" scenarios and action plans to address these possibilities.

Incorporate contingency budgets that can be monitored at the board level.

Never delay on vouchering work already completed. In these uncertain times, it's difficult to assess when funding will be



cut off. Payment for legitimate work performed should be at front of mind for leaders and finance teams.

Overcome Staffing Challenges

Use outsourcing to stabilize billing, cost reporting, corporate compliance, and human resource functions. Not only does this ensure that the team working on these critical tasks is qualified and well briefed, but it also safeguards these operational necessities from the impacts and costs of turnover. In addition, while many core administrative functions can seem essential, many tasks drain resources and require specialization. Be sure to factor in the "opportunity cost" of removing certain tasks from key employees' plates so they can address other pressing matters.

Assess Your Financial Operations

Re-evaluate how information flows through your financial systems, and determine if data and processes are operating effectively and efficiently. Many teams operate by the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" mantra. However, this approach encourages a lack of routine assessment, which reduces the potential for innovation and makes it difficult for finance teams to keep pace with leadership.

Conduct independent operational reviews to assist in the following vital tasks:

Identify opportunities to utilize data.

Ensure proper internal controls.

Reduce inefficiencies caused by archaic procedures.

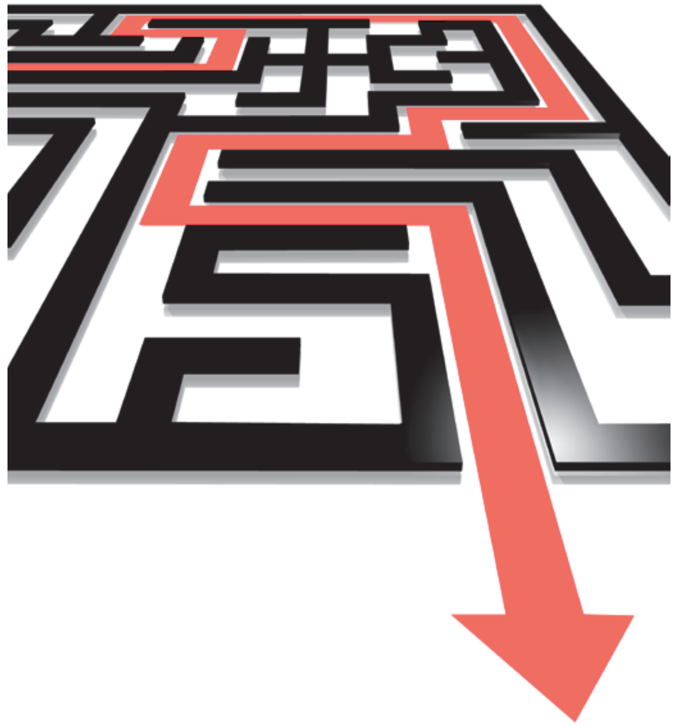
Update oversight and review of finance teams at least every five years. Given all the uncertainties of funding, there's no time like the present to begin.

Consider Mergers & Affiliations

While not necessarily common across the industry, consolidations and affiliations can address a number of operational and leadership deficits. For those considering consolidations or affiliations as viable options, it's critical to do the following:

Solidify strong governance and board development, and seek advice from outside counsel. The worst thing you can do is wait until financial conditions become too dire to consider a merger strategy. If you do so, someone else will make these decisions for you. Planning proactively for these possibilities is paramount.

Ken McGivney is a partner in the Bonadio Group's Assurance Division (bonadio.com). He has served the human services, healthcare, and tax-exempt markets for over 20 years, providing audit, IRS 990, cost reporting, and consulting services.



Fuel for the Future

Today's challenges require you to be nimble, monitor your situation closely, and be open to creative ideas. Discover more coping strategies here (NonprofitWorld.org):

How to Overcome Your Top Four HR Challenges (Vol. 35, No. 1)

The Bucket System: Managing Your Assets in the Face of Volatility (Vol. 35, No. 2)

Risks Get Riskier for Nonprofits: ERM Can Help (Vol. 38, No. 1)

Not a "Someday" Dream: The Steps to Sustainable Income (Vol. 37, No. 4)

Beyond Outsourcing: Five Shared-Service Ideas (Vol. 26, No. 4)

The High Cost of Employee Turnover – and How to Avoid It (Vol. 31, No. 3)

Use a Merger or Acquisition to Further Your Mission (Vol. 41, No. 1)

Is a Performance Audit in Your Future? (Vol. 41, No. 2)

The Risky Six: Keys to Shed Fear & Take Smart Risks (Vol. 40, No. 2)

From Government Funds to Income Diversity: A Map For The Quest (Vol. 35, No. 4)

Is Your Budget Bulletproof? (Vol. 40, No. 3)

Exposing the Beast: Seven Deadly Wastes in Nonprofits (Vol. 36, No. 4)

Investment Strategies for a Smooth Financial Future (Vol. 35, No. 3)

Do You Know the Two Types of ROI? Do You Have Both? (Vol. 41, No. 3)

Why "Diversifying Revenue" Isn't Enough: What Else Must You Do?

Survive the funding crisis by harnessing the power of technology.

By Max Friedman

Paula Fynboh will never forget the day she was notified that DOGE's immediate cuts to the AmeriCorps program would result in a $350K funding shortfall for her nonprofit – one-third of their annual budget.

For more than 30 years, Aspire Afterschool Learning (aspireafterschool.org) has been a lifeline for historically underserved families in Arlington, VA, providing the only free, comprehensive after-school and summer programs for 3rd- to 8th-graders across the county. "We've never looked to the government to solve all our problems," says Paula, Aspire's executive director, who likens nonprofit funding to a four-legged stool. "We've always been willing to look everywhere for support, but when one of those legs just gets cut off overnight, it creates instability."

Nonprofits – especially those that rely on government support for a large chunk of their budgets – have always faced funding insecurities, but with the recent grant freezes, budget cuts, and resulting market uncertainty putting so many organizations in jeopardy, the long-standing directive to "diversify revenue" feels insufficient. For nonprofits to survive, they need resources that simplify giving and accelerate fundraising. Speed and simplicity aren't luxuries in today's fundraising climate – they're necessities, cutting through bureaucracy and helping organizations raise money faster. While technology isn't a silver bullet that will magically solve the funding crisis, digital tools are already playing a critical role in navigating nonprofit leaders through these choppy waters.

How Technology Builds Resilience

Armed with better technology, you can transform your donation process, simplify operations, and keep your organization focused on your mission. Even under pressure, and even with the smallest teams, you can harness the power of technology to:

Streamline giving with compelling, mobile-friendly campaigns that are easy to share and offer meaningful ways to get involved in fundraising efforts.

Lighten the administrative load by automating stewardship processes so you can focus on building relationships, not managing spreadsheets.

Prioritize sustainability, empowering supporters to make monthly donations, and enabling your organization to operate leanly.

Paula and her team at Aspire needed to act fast to continue offering their essential services. Within 36 hours, they launched a public fundraising campaign to raise awareness and rally support, calling on the Aspire community to "rise together" to fill the funding gap. And rise it did.

Board members, volunteers, and parents created their own peer-to-peer fundraising pages connected to the central campaign, each with personalized reflections on Aspire's impact. Supporters raised tens of thousands of dollars, and the fundraising page continues to serve as a hub for this outpouring of support for Aspire as well as a central place for the team to share important updates, links, and campaign messaging.

"We all collectively have to be part of this solution right now," Paula says. "Launching this campaign so quickly and using an online platform that brought our community together was a way to invite everyone in to help solve the problem."

Aspire is just one of the thousands of organizations navigating enormous funding cuts in addition to huge shifts in tax incentives* for major donors, corporations, and grassroots supporters. While so much is uncertain, nonprofit leaders can use smarter technology to navigate what's ahead.

If it's been a while since you audited your tech stack, now's the time – not next month, not next budget cycle. Carve out the time to take a good, hard look at the fundraising tools you currently use and seek out alternatives, focusing on accessible technology that can simplify donations and pledges, boost donor engagement, and scale without large teams or expensive overhead.

Start by asking these questions:

How many different platforms are you juggling? How much time do you spend exporting and importing data between your CRM (contact relationship management) system, e-mail software, donation platform, and ticketing website?

What digital tools are having the most – and least – impact? What strategies could you try for the first time (for example, peer-to-peer campaigns, silent auctions, pledge drives)?

*See "The Permanent Universal Deduction: What It Means for Nonprofits" at givebutter.com.

Is your donation flow smooth or clunky? Can donors use modern payment methods, like digital wallets, Venmo, PayPal, ACH (bank transfer), and DAF (donor-advised funds)?

What busywork could you automate? Are you manually sending donation receipts, thank-you's, pledge reminders, and event confirmations?

How can you make your revenue more sustainable? How can you grow your monthly giving program? Are you using automatic upsell messages to encourage recurring gifts?

Tech isn't about bells and whistles – it's about sustainability. Using monthly-giving tools, Paula and her team are bringing in more predictable revenue that they can count on for the long term.

"You don't have to have $10K or $100K," she says, "Just $25 a month really does make a difference, especially for local, community-based nonprofits."

By evaluating your tech and streamlining your processes where you can, your nonprofit can be more agile, raise more online, and offset losses and unpredictability through new revenue streams.

Equipped with technology that makes it quick and easy to share their story, deepen relationships, and facilitate a smooth donation process, Aspire is growing individual giving while continuing to pursue other funding sources from state and local governments, foundations, and the business community. "We don't have a funding problem. We have a fear and scarcity problem," Paula says. "But we've been through challenges before. We're scrappy, we're creative, and if we continue to lead in that spirit, we will create a sense of urgency and a critical appeal for people to give so they feel they're investing in hope – not just this year but for years to come."

Your organization's future requires more than funding diversity. It demands digital adaptability, simplicity, and speed, helping you to operate more leanly, engage supporters in new ways, and raise the funds you need to continue your essential work. Bolstered by the right tech, no matter how small your organization, you can thrive through the funding challenges of today, and beyond.

Max Friedman is the co-founder and CEO of Givebutter (givebutter.com), an all-in-one platform for nonprofit fundraising and donor management that empowers millions of changemakers to raise more, pay less, and give better. Nonprofits use Givebutter to bring together multiple tools, including donation forms, fundraising campaigns, events, auctions, CRM, e-mail, and more. And thanks to a 100% transparent tip-or-fee model, Givebutter's core fundraising features are free. As the #1 rated nonprofit software company on G2 across multiple categories, Givebutter is on a mission to power the next billion changemakers.

Always Be Ready to Pivot

Flexibility is the key if you want to keep your funding sustainable. You'll find a range of different angles on raising funds, earning money, and taking charge of your financial future at NonprofitWorld.org:

The Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Evolution (Vol. 30, No. 6)

Why You Need an App for Fundraising (Vol. 36, No. 3)

Will Donor-Advised Funds Revolutionize Philanthropy? (Vol. 19, No. 2)

Reap More Online Donations: Five Steps to a Better Website (Vol. 40, No. 1)

More Money Together: Shared Fundraising Strategies (Vol. 43, No. 2)

What's the Secret to Asking for Bequests? (Vol. 42, No. 2)

Not a "Someday" Dream: The Steps to Sustainable Income (Vol. 36, No. 4)

Spur Donors to Give Every Month (Vol. 43, Vol. 3)

Pitfalls to Avoid when Seeking Corporate Support (Vol. 34, No. 4)

Seven VoIP Trends Empowering Nonprofit Professionals (Vol. 43, No. 1)

Is Your Budget Bulletproof? (Vol. 40, No. 3)

Integrate Social Media into Your Website (Vol. 35, No. 1)

The Best Way to Raise Endowment Funds (Vol. 42, No. 1)

Implementing Lean for Nonprofits (Vol. 32, No. 1)

Put a Spotlight on Your Digital Footprint (Vol. 43, No. 1)

Focus on What We Share

In *Activating the Common Good* (bkconnection.com), Peter Block calls for replacing today's dominant business narrative with the common good – the well-being of a community or country as a whole – as the primary organizing principle. The business perspective (of growth, speed, individualism, and competitiveness) has become a daily assumption that has resulted in perpetual poverty, social inequality, and damage to our shared environment.

Block explains how the business perspective exploits people and causes them to think of themselves only as consumers. Reclaiming communal well-being requires a shift in assumptions – a long and difficult undertaking.

The common good is more sustainable than the individualistic, short-term business perspective. It welcomes participation and belonging rather than separation. The book focuses on religion, journalism, land use, and economics as key areas to shift how the common good could be represented. Redefining economic terms, such as wealth, cost, pace, competition, scarcity, and ownership, is important to how we measure well-being.

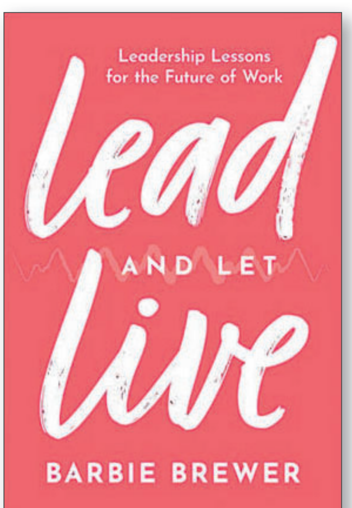
Nonprofits are in a strong position to lead the move toward the common-good perspective. People in our organizations join together to accomplish what we can't do alone. Participating with our beneficiaries in problem-solving helps us all to focus on communal well-being.

How we gather makes a difference in how we act together. Block's book guides us in forming gatherings that help to give voice, a sense of belonging, and a commitment to the well-being of us all.

–reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Lessons for the Future of Work

Leadership is about believing in yourself and in the people who look to you for motivation and direction, Barbie Brewer points out in her bold, inspiring book *Lead and Let Live* (amplifypublishinggroup.com). She poses a number of compelling questions to ask yourself. For example:



As a leader, are you doing all you can to boost the development of your employees?

Do you periodically step out of your comfort zone, and do you encourage others to do so, too?

What tools do you need to develop yourself?

Are you tapping into the promise and potential that people may not even know they possess?

Is mentoring a consistent part of your life as a leader?

Have you changed and adapted as the world around you has changed?

Do you know when and how to take calculated risks to push into new territory?

Are you comfortable with messiness, imprecision, and uncertainty?

If your goal is to expand opportunities for all people, why aren't you moving forward with a greater sense of urgency?

Are you strengthened, rather than weakened, by your setbacks?

Change is unfolding all around you so you must build it into your development strategies, Brewer asserts. Why then, she asks, wouldn't you want to become more adaptive, resilient, and courageous in embracing change? Her eloquent book will show you how.

> "That question right there? It's leadership."

How to Use AI without Losing Your Leadership

If you're like most leaders, AI has become a daily part of your workflow. It's summarizing reports, drafting e-mails, organizing data – even suggesting how to phrase that sensitive message you need to send. You may be wondering:

"Is it possible to collaborate with AI and stay human?"

"Where's my voice in all this?"

"How do I keep my team connected, aligned, and curious when a machine spits out the first draft?"

Here's what we know: You don't have to choose between tech and trust. "The best leaders are learning to collaborate with AI without losing the human touch," says David Dye (david.dye@letsgrowleaders.com). He proposes the following steps to take before you let AI take a crack at something:

1. Frame the task. The first step is up to you: You set the goal, the tone, and the purpose.

2. Ask AI to generate a draft.

3. Review and refine AI's draft. Ask what's missing and what feels off.

4. Check for risks and gaps. Again, this is your job, not AI's. Think people first, and ask: "Who does this affect? If we roll this out tomorrow, who might be confused, frustrated, or left out?" That question right there? It's leadership.

5. Finalize the plan, make the call, take the action, move forward. Who does it? You. Leadership lives in the decision and the follow-through.

Bring your team members along by asking them a few quick coaching questions, such as:

"What part of this work is better with AI – and what still needs us?"

"How do we keep our message aligned with our values?"

"What could go sideways if we just copy-and-paste this output?"

"Where might this speed up our work – and where might it disconnect us?"

AI can take you in the wrong direction if you're not paying attention, but it can also be amazing. It can be a big help in summarizing reports, survey results, or long meetings so you can spend energy on what matters. When you have a good idea, AI can expand it for you. Just don't stop at its first suggestion. Ask AI, "What's a fresh angle we could try for this message?" Then bring it back to team members and ask them, "What would make this sound more like us?"

The key? You stay in the driver's seat. AI doesn't own your goals, your values, or your relationships. You do. Collaboration is still about people. AI is just a very fast, very literal teammate that needs direction, Dye says.

Collaborating with AI isn't about doing more with fewer people. It's about doing the right work faster, together. It's about asking AI for a starting point and then shaping the result into your voice and your values. You bring the clarity. You build the trust. AI can help with the lift, but you still lead the way.

The Secret Ingredient All Leaders Need

What's the crucial element that determines how good a leader you'll be? The answer, according to Jennifer Garvey Berger in *Changing on the Job* (Stanford University Press, sup.org) is self-awareness. The best leaders are those who have spent time learning to know themselves, develop their strengths, and open their minds.

Your leadership capabilities are shaped, Berger says, by "how big a world you can comprehend, how many perspectives on reality you can hold, how much you go with your preexisting assumptions versus questioning them and crafting them." Just as there are different forms of physical fitness, there are different "forms of mind" that highlight your level of "complexity fitness," she says. Complexity fitness is the shape you need to be in to cope with the world around you and deal with the many pressures that come with being a leader.

She describes four different mindsets that shape the world we see:

Self-sovereign: You'll automatically take this perspective if you're centered only on yourself. Because you see things from this narrow view, you'll experience everyone else's points of view as mysterious. You'll find authority in external rules and regulations and solve problems in the most simple, linear way. And because you don't hold others' perspectives or alternatives easily, you tend to blame others for your struggles.

Socialized: With this perspective, you'll become embedded in the perspectives of other people and see the world through their eyes. You'll judge right and wrong, good and bad from the viewpoint of others.

Self-authored: If you have this mindset, you'll be able to take multiple perspectives while maintaining your own. You can understand the opinions of others and use them to strengthen your own argument or set of principles. You find authority from within yourself rather than from others.

> "These mindsets shape the world we see."

Self-transforming: You understand other people's views and use them to transform your own perspective, becoming more expansive and more inclusive. You take the differences of others as a way to create a larger view of the world. Authority is fluid and shared, not located in any particular person or job.

When you lead from a self-transforming perspective, you face challenges with less stress, more wisdom, and more courage than if you see the world from one of the other mindsets. And as you gain more experience, you tend to move toward the self-transforming form of mind – although, Berger cautions, "experience alone doesn't buy you development – you have to actually exercise that experience in some way that challenges your own worldview."

Understanding the differences between us changes how we see each other, Berger notes. You may recall being shocked when others didn't understand something that seemed obvious to you. Now you may realize that you were speaking across different forms of mind. "Understanding the profoundly different ways we make sense of the world," says Berger, helps us treat one another with more curiosity, more grace, and more patience.

> "90% of breaches are the result of human error."

Protect Your Organization from Digital Breaches

To be sure everyone at your organization is practicing digital safety, provide them with the following tips (offered by the experts at the Center for Cyber Safety and Education, iamcybersafe.org):

Think before you click. Studies show that 90% of breaches are the result of human error. When you see links, especially in e-mails, stop and consider whether they're legitimate before clicking on them. If in question, go directly to the organization's website instead of clicking on links.

Connect to a secure network. Make sure you're using an organization-issued Virtual Private Network (VPN) to access work accounts. Home routers should be updated to the most current software and secured with a lengthy, unique passphrase. Don't connect and conduct business on public wi-fi unless you're using a VPN.

Use only organization-issued communication and storage solutions for all work correspondence and file management. This means, without exception, e-mails should be sent via your work e-mail account, video calls made on your organization-issued approved software, and files stored in the proper place according to your organization's policies. Following these measures is vital to ensure your IT team can protect the infrastructure.

Lock down your login. Create long and unique passphrases (and change them every 60-90 days) and use multi-factor authentication (MFA) wherever possible. MFA enables strong authentication tools that are difficult to hack.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Legacy Contributions for Every Nonprofit

Legacy giving is at the core of people's beliefs, aspirations, and life's work. But it requires a focus on what happens after death – something few people like to think about. Thus, legacy gifts can be highly emotional, and decisions about them take time.

When you discuss legacy giving with your donors, you need to do so differently and more personally from the way you communicate about ordinary contributions. Such talks start with a message focused on the future beneficiaries. Aimée Lindenberger, a nonprofit communications expert, has written several books (charityinfo.ca) to help nonprofits address legacy giving. The first, *How to Talk About Legacy Giving,* was reviewed in Vol. 42, No. 4 of *Nonprofit World*. Now she's released the second of five planned books, all aimed on making clear that promoting legacy contributions is something all nonprofits can and should be working on, even if they haven't done so (or even thought about it) yet.

In her first book, she describes how your organization can build awareness of legacy gift options, generate leads, and strengthen commitments. In her second book, *How To Engage Potential Legacy Donors*, she explains how to connect with potential and committed contributors. She details a variety of communication strategies, including hard copy, electronic, and more personal means. She categorizes communication into reactive (responding to unsolicited contributions), passive (marketing to general audiences), and proactive (engaging with committed legacy contributors). She also discusses integrating legacy planning into your organization's overall strategy.

Lindenberger's books are comprehensive yet uncomplicated guides for including legacy supporters in a long-term organizational investment. They remind us of the most essential things about asking for bequests: use simple, clear language, embed information about legacy giving in all your communications, and use stories to inspire and engage people. Nothing could be simpler – or more important.

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Let Your Values Lead the Way

Does the way you spend your time reflect your highest priorities? In *Chasing Perfection* (chasingperfection.net), Sue Hawkes provides a valuable exercise you can use to answer this question for yourself:

1. Write a brief summary of your personal and organizational mission, vision, and values. The two should be closely aligned. If you're not clear what these are, do some digging before continuing with the exercise, using the articles on values, vision, and mission in "Beyond the Briefs" (page 37) as a guide.

2. List the three to five areas that are critical to your mission, vision, and values.

> "Imagine it. Don't edit it."

3. Take a blank set of calendar pages for the next three to six months, and fill them with what you hope to accomplish during those months. Imagine it. Don't edit it. Just set up the next months as you would love to have them unfold for yourself and your organization.

4. Print out your actual calendar for the same months you used for your "ideal" calendar and compare the two. How does what you actually do on a day-to-day basis compare with your ideal calendar? What are the biggest gaps? What's included? What's excluded?

5. Jot down the first step you need to take to bring reality in line with your ideal.

6. Take that first step immediately, especially if you find your ideal and reality are worlds apart.

> "How can you harness informal leadership power?"

Culture Questions

Without a deep understanding of your organization's culture, any change effort you undertake will fail. In a survey by the Katzenbach Center, 80% of respondents say that their organizational culture must evolve to succeed. But 25% report that culture efforts at their organization have had limited results.

Why? When change efforts fail, it's because leaders didn't focus on three vital elements, which John Katzenbach details in *The Critical Few* (bkconnection.com):

1. Traits: characteristics that are at the heart of people's emotional connection to what they do

2. Behaviors: "the way things are done around here"

3. Authentic informal leaders: people who have a high degree of emotional intuition or social connectedness; these people should guide every stage of your organization's cultural journey.

To make sure your culture change succeeds, begin by asking yourself and others (via surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews) questions that pinpoint what really matters in your organization. Examples from Katzenbach's book:

- **How would you describe** your organization's culture? What are some aspects of the culture that are distinctive or unique? (For example, is your culture based more on relationships or metrics?)
- **What makes people proud** to work at your organization?
- **Can you identify** any behaviors or aspects of the culture that detract from your goals?
- **What keeps you up** at night? What work issues do you complain about at home?
- **What behaviors and actions** would lead your organization to succeed if they were replicated at a greater scale?
- **Which people in your organization** have an influence on the feelings and behaviors of those around them? How can you harness their informal leadership power so that they can help change the culture?

- **What can leaders do right now** to role-model the desired behaviors?
- **What will you do differently,** starting today, to begin changing the culture?

Transform Your Discussions with This Method

"Many of us think of conversation as chatting," say the authors of *The Art of Focused Conversation* (newsociety.com). "The art of serious conversation seems to be fading away. In the internet age, many social-media exchanges are less than 280 characters – quick, impersonal, and often without any development of ideas. Further, many platforms use algorithms that funnel information to us that supports our positions so that we feel validated. We find ourselves talking or even yelling past each other rather than asking questions to understand."

You can help people become more thoughtful and creative in their dialogue with an approach the authors call the "focused conversation method," in which you ask questions at four levels:

1. The objective level includes questions about facts and external reality. Examples: When did we last talk about this? What ideas came up in previous conversations?

2. The reflective level focuses on emotions and personal reactions. Examples: What are you feeling positive about? What concerns you?

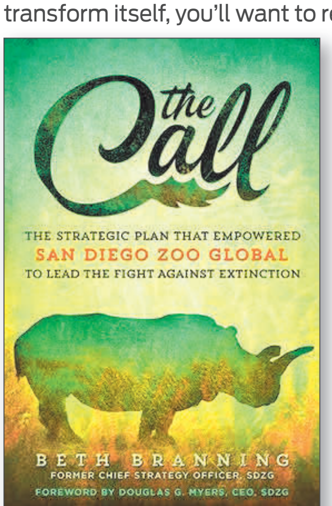
3. The interpretive level draws out meaning, values, and implications. Examples: What issues can you see? Which ones are most important? Who else needs to be involved?

4. The decisional level brings the conversation to a close and makes a resolution about the future. Examples: What actions can we take? What would be our first step?

This questioning approach is versatile, provides room for real listening, and helps people focus long enough to see what direction is needed. It saves time and energy and goes beyond chit-chat to create meaningful results.

Tale of Transformation & a New Breed of Strategic Plan

For an amazing story of how a nonprofit can completely transform itself, you'll want to read *The Call* by Beth Branning



(San Diego Zoo Global, sandiegozoo.org). Branning describes how the zoo made strategic choices that led to a new vision, one dedicated to leading the fight against wildlife extinction. Here, she outlines the strategic-planning process they used:

Create a strategic-planning team. The team's aim should be to come up with a new strategy that can be explained simply and pared down to a few key elements. As author Lawrence Bossidy has said, if you can't reduce your strategy to one page, you haven't got a plan.

> "If you can't reduce your strategy to one page, you haven't got a plan."

Reduce the signal-to-noise ratio. During the strategic-planning team's initial phase, focus on concepts first, then condense them down to their essence.

Ensure that the plan's wordsmithing is done by as few people as possible. Groups don't wordsmith well. Tap your best internal wordsmiths to craft the language of the plan. These should be people with a talent for translating ideas into clear, compelling, easy-to-understand language.

Structure the feedback. Once the wording of your plan is fine-tuned, provide a short window of time for the strategic-planning team to comment. At this point, don't let them throw new ideas into the mix. To forestall that tendency, ask them to respond to the following questions about the draft: Does it convey the intended meaning outlined in the conceptual plan? Is it inspirational? Is it clear? Has it been purged of every word that isn't necessary?

Communicate your plan to those who will implement it. Be sure to do so in a way that's meaningful, memorable, and inspiring.

Brand your plan. Give it a name and a visual identity. (The San Diego Zoo decided on "The Call" as the name of their brand because it spoke to the urgency at the core of their plan. For the plan's visual identity, they combined their logo with pictures of animals that were a priority to save from extinction.)

Take every opportunity to make the plan visible during the launch period. (For instance, the San Diego Zoo's management team committed to communicating about the plan to some internal audience every day for the first 100 days.)

Empower employees at all levels to use the plan as a guide when making decisions.

Learn to say "no" to work that doesn't take you toward your vision. Such work, even if it yields a reward, is a distraction. It's a slippery slope that can lead you off course.

Give Voice to a New Reality

At the heart of your nonprofit's success is the *agency* of the people within it, submit Frederick Miller and Judith Katz, the authors of *The Power of Agency* (bkconnection.com). You give people agency when you ensure that they have the power, influence, and voice to make choices about their work to help improve the organization, Miller and Katz tell us. Agency applies to all organizations, particularly those seeking a human face rather than traditional command-and-control practices.

A focus on agency means integrating each person's assets to work toward the organization's underlying purpose. In nonprofits, of course, the purpose is to invest in the success of the community (or a slice of it), not just working for the narrow purpose of those who have ownership of the organization.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34

In brief, according to Miller and Katz, these are the steps to using agency to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness:

Decide if you're willing to put in the effort necessary to create a culture that will support the changing needs of the workforce. Identify barriers to creating the necessary culture – for example, the bureaucratic red tape that may make raising an issue not worth the effort.

Test the organization's readiness for change. Tap the thinking of people throughout the organization, and ask them questions about the amount of autonomy, authority, decision-making, and leadership people are able to exercise.

In small groups, have people discuss their feelings about creating a new culture. Then have leaders incorporate what they learn from those discussions into a vision for the future.

Identify the new mindsets needed to support the new culture. Create a narrative of the journey toward agency and the role each person will play in it.

Share the new narrative with the larger organization to create buy-in. Talk about your hopes for the new culture, how you as a leader will be different, and how people at all levels will need to change. Listen to feedback, questions, and suggestions.

As you implement the change process, ensure that all people are clear on their roles and have the support they need. Communicate frequently via newsletters, e-mails, and other channels about the new narrative and the actions ahead to keep people informed and engaged.

Give people leeway to experiment with a new way of interacting. Encourage people to view mistakes and missteps as learning opportunities consistent with the new culture of agency. Monitor progress, and refine strategies as needed. Conduct bi-monthly pulse surveys to identify areas that might need to be refined to ensure the new narrative takes root.

Each step maximizes creative leadership in every role. When each person's assets are unleashed to move to a cooperative vision for the future, the outcome is profound.

–reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Win the Heart of Every Employee

Employee engagement is shockingly low in organizations across the country. But, as Mark Miller attests in *Win the Heart* (bkconnection.com), it's not an employee problem. It's a leadership problem. Building a culture of engagement should be at the core of every leader's job description, he advises.

If the objective is to win the hearts of every employee, the strategy for the leader is to provide the cornerstones of **CARE**:

Connection: Connect people to each other and the vision. Care enough to ask thoughtful questions and to listen. Learn people's stories. "Real conversations," Miller says, "are the bridge to real connections."

Affirmation: Say "Thank you" whenever you see an employee doing something good. Thank employees at the end of the day. Thank them with words, with small gifts, and with your attention. Don't let a day go by without saying "Thank you" in one way or another.

Responsibility: Give people real responsibility for goals, methods, and decisions. Let them share responsibility for their learning and growth. Create a culture in which responsibility is the norm, not the exception.

Environment: Fill the workplace with plants, healthy food, and views of nature, as well as places to congregate, exercise, and relax. Pay attention to the details of people's surroundings. Use rituals, stories, and celebrations to create a vibrant, caring, connected workplace.

> "Employee engagement is shockingly low."

> "ICAs represent the future of choice itself."

AI Moves from Advisor to Architect

A new report by *MIT Sloan Management Review* (sloanreview.mit.edu) reveals how leading organizations are deploying *intelligent choice architectures* (ICAs) to make decisions. The report, "Winning With Intelligent Choice Architectures," concludes that organizational success now flows not only from optimizing human judgment but from building superior systems that expand, refine, and enhance the choices humans ultimately make.

These AI-empowered systems strike a balance between automating processes and augmenting human insight. ICAs generate new strategic options, learn from results, and reshape the landscape of possibilities that executives consider.

"ICAs flip the script," says Michael Schrage, co-author of the report. "They do not just learn from decisions – they learn how to improve the environment in which decisions are made. That's not analytics, that's architecture."

Based on these research findings, the authors warn that if leaders don't explicitly assign decision rights in ICA-enabled systems, those systems will set priorities, trade-offs, and defaults – often without visibility, oversight, or accountability. Success, they say, depends less on AI capability and more on organizational readiness. They urge organizations to reflect on questions like:

Does the organization treat decision-making as a designable process?

Do leaders know what choices they're not seeing?

Are governance and incentives aligned to optimize quality, not just decision speed?

ICAs aren't the next stage of automation; they represent the future of choice itself. They reframe choice-making as a design problem: structuring, surfacing, and expanding meta choices that influence outcomes before options are consciously considered.

According to the report, the future of leadership lies not in making better decisions but in designing environments where better decisions become *inevitable.* Tomorrow's most successful leaders won't use artificial intelligence just to analyze data: They'll use it to rethink, redesign, and rearchitect their workplace. The result? Decisions become faster, smarter, more accessible, and more accountable. Both human and machine agency are clearly defined, auditable, and aligned with purpose.

Why You Really Don't Have a Time Management Problem

If you think you can manage your time, you may be setting yourself up for disappointment, frustration – or even catastrophe. When you plan your day, you need to think not in terms of *hours* but of *energy* or *bandwidth,* say Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir in *Scarcity* (Times Books, henryholt.com).

Bandwidth measures your ability to pay attention, make good decisions, and stick with your plans. Here are some ways to use it to advantage:

Rest your brain. After a period of high-focus, high-energy activity, do something restful and non-stressful before you tackle anything that's critically important. Your brain will be over-taxed and needs a recovery period. Take a nap, or do something mindless and soothing, before stressing your brain again.

Know your vulnerabilities. Each of us has a certain type of mistake that we tend to make over and over again. Make a special effort to focus your attention in those situations.

Slow down and listen. If you're worried, anxious, or thinking about something else, you won't have the bandwidth necessary to truly listen and empathize with another person. Too great a cognitive load can make you seem uncaring, impatient, and intolerant. When you want to make a real connection with another person, don't meet with them right after you've already used a lot of bandwidth on another task or when you're distracted with something else.

Redo your calendar. When planning, think about what your brain can handle, not how many tasks you can cram into your schedule.

Set shorter deadlines. It's human nature to wait till a deadline looms before really getting down to work. Tighter deadlines focus the mind and increase productivity. You end up concentrating better and wasting less energy.

Be mindful. Always do just one thing at a time, with your full attention. "Multitasking" may seem efficient, but it's just the opposite. Instead of doing one thing well, you'll end up doing two (or more) things badly – even disastrously. You'll lower your bandwidth, and that will make you dumber, more impulsive, and far more mistake-prone.

Use tunnels with care. You can be amazingly productive when you "tunnel" – or look at one thing very narrowly. But tunneling causes you to ignore everything else – and that can lead to problems. When you're focused closely on one task, shift your gaze occasionally to see the big picture. Otherwise, you may miss something crucial.

> "Think in terms of bandwidth."

SPRINGBOARD YOUR THINKING

The next time you're wondering how to manage your time, change the frame to how you're managing your priorities. Charlie Gilkey (productiveflourishing.com) offers these questions to jumpstart your thinking:

What actions can I take today, tomorrow, and this week that most reflect my priorities?

What should take precedence for me and my team right now? (Priorities change with time. Make sure you're not acting on yesteryear's priorities.)

What's on my plate that doesn't reflect my priorities – and what needs to happen to get it off my plate?

With whom can I share my priorities so that I receive the support I need to take action on them?

How to Tap into the Latest Giving Trends

Recent statistics on giving provide keys you can use to raise funds based on donor trends. Gail Perry (gailperrygroup.com) shares these insights:

Fewer people are giving, although those who do are giving more. That means you must work harder to build deeper relationships with a smaller pool of supporters. "It's about showing up in meaningful ways for the donors who are already most committed to your mission," Perry explains. "If you're not prioritizing high-touch cultivation, personalized stewardship, and ongoing gift conversations, you're leaving potential transformational gifts on the table."

Everyone's talking about the $70 trillion wealth transfer that's at hand. Here's how to take advantage of it:

Make planned giving part of your core fundraising and stewardship strategy year-round. Don't silo these messages in a niche program or treat them as an afterthought. When you integrate them naturally into your appeals, newsletters, and donor conversations, it becomes easier – and more effective – to plant the seed for future gifts.

Gain bequests by introducing the idea in a thoughtful, low-pressure way. No complicated legal talk. No awkward scripts. Just a simple question like: "Have you ever thought about including our organization in your will?" It's that easy. "Most donors say yes – or at least they're open to learning more," Perry says. "The real surprise? Sadly, most organizations never ask."

Millennials and Gen Z are shaping the future of fundraising. These donors are deeply committed to making a difference, but they often struggle to connect with traditional nonprofit appeals. They give to causes, not institutions. They're motivated by their personal values, activism, and their community. Inspire them with the following tactics:

Lead with the cause, not the organization. Frame your appeal around the mission or issue at hand, rather than promoting your brand or institution. Use language like "Join the movement" or "Be part of the change" to invite action. These donors want to feel like they're contributing to something bigger than themselves.

Be authentic, transparent, and real. "Millennials and Gen Z are super quick to spot inauthentic messaging. They respond best

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

to straightforward, honest communication in a relatable voice (like all donors!)," Perry reminds us.

Ditch the jargon and corporate tone. Get rid of the formal, dignified "nonprofit-speak." Instead, share real stories that show how people can make an impact.

Create engaging content on the right platforms. Because these generations are digital natives, you can reach them on Instagram, TikTok, and X (formerly Twitter). These platforms make it easy to deliver visually compelling, bite-sized content that's easily shareable. You can highlight specific causes, campaigns, or success stories – and, remember, it can be both fun *and* interesting.

Empower peer-to-peer fundraising. These young donors respond well to peer-to-peer asks (79% of Gen Z donors say they're more likely to give when asked by a friend or family member).

"Yes, the giving landscape is narrowing," says Perry, "but for prepared organizations, this is an opportunity. With the right approach, you can deepen trust, inspire larger investments, and build a fundraising program that thrives, even in a shifting environment."

"The real surprise? Sadly, most organizations never ask."

A New Take on Leadership

Leadership is a social construct with deep roots in Western frameworks. The concept of leadership grew out of the Enlightenment and is tied to neoliberalism, the dominant assumption of our modern world. In *Leadership as Stewardship* (Edward Elgar Publishing, e-elgar.com), Marian Iszatt-White signals a new focus of stewardship as responsible leadership – a form that holds people in trust to each other, tying our futures together.

Stewardship focuses on who and how to serve. Its orientation of actions toward others acknowledges the interconnectedness of leading. Stewardship emphasizes building relationships and balancing the present with concern for the future. It implies the adoption of diverse worldviews to enrich the current – somewhat limited – view of leadership. It entails caring for the environment in order to take care of the people that inhabit it, not as separate from it.

While Iszatt-White isn't ready to replace the concept of leadership, she argues for stewardship as the latest iteration of what it means to be a leader. Stewardship – of teams, organization members, communities, and the environment – is evident in successful leadership. We can see this in the increased focus on a sense of belonging and a growing attention to the commons.

–reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

Five Amazing Facts about Donor-Advised Funds

Donor-advised funds (DAFs)may be more important than you think. That's the conclusion of a study by Chariot (givechariot.com). Here are some of the findings:

DAFs increase individual giving. After a donor gives to an organization via a DAF, the median increase in annual giving goes up 100%. ***Find out which of your donors has DAFs and cultivate them***.

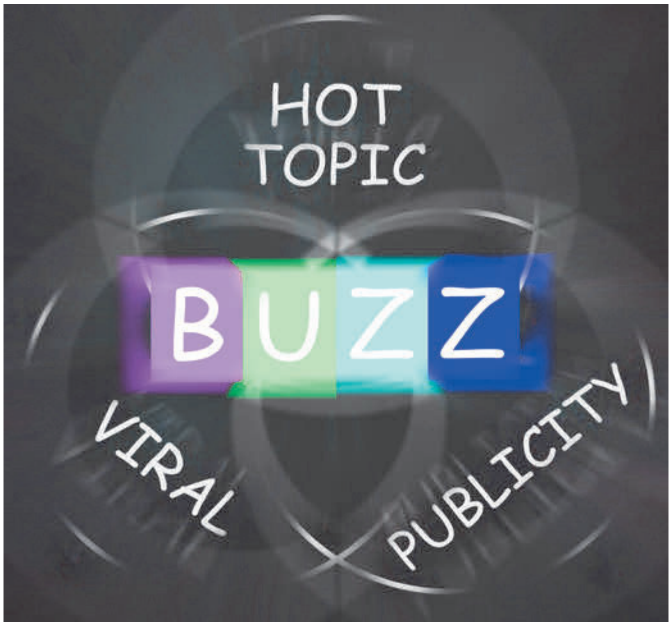
Donors at all levels use DAFs: 69% of DAF gifts are under $1,000, 55% are under $500, 41% are under $250, 14% are under $100. This is not a population of mega-donors. ***Remind donors across the spectrum that they can give via DAFs***.

DAF donors are loyal. Average DAF donor retention is 13% higher than that of non-DAF donors.

DAFs remain the fastest-growing giving vehicle in philanthropy. ***Invest in your DAF strategy.***

DAF giving is becoming increasingly more significant for smaller nonprofits. From 2020 to 2024, DAF giving increased by 10% for large organizations – but by 143% for smaller organizations. ***Don't be intimidated by DAFs.*** You too can make the most of them.

–reviewed ny Jeff Brooks



Lies, Fakery, & Deceit — & How to Respond

The spread of falsehoods and misinformation in our society is stoking division and fear. Barbara McQuade lays out the problem in unerring detail along with helpful responses in the new, updated edition of *Attack from Within*, published by Seven Stories Press (sevenstories.com). Here are a few of her suggestions:

Combat misinformation by ferreting out the facts from trustworthy sources. Understand that "the truth" is debatable and hard to pin down, but facts are objective, concrete, and unbiased. Although we're all free to form our own views, she says, we must commit to debating them from a shared set of facts in order to solve problems and move forward.

Be willing to compromise, listen to others, and care more about nurturing relationships than imposing your will and overpowering the discussion with your own opinions.

Remember the importance of unwritten norms such as mutual tolerance and forbearance. These norms call you to use restraint in exercising power.

Demand that your leaders face challenges with courage and optimism rather than preying on people's fears. Hold leaders accountable and express your dissatisfaction by voting them out of office.

Look for evidence to back up your ideas whenever you need to make informed decisions.

Exercise restraint when you see a snarky comment online. Sharing, liking, and adding a mocking comment are actions that exacerbate division and fuel disinformers.

Heal divisions by offering olive branches to those with whom you disagree. People who have been duped by constant lies will be reluctant to change their minds. They may, as Ruth Ben-Ghiat points out, "feel ashamed and unwilling to admit their errors of judgment unless they are approached with the right spirit of openness, at the right time." People can "dig their trenches deeper, or they can reach across the lines to stop a new cycle of destruction, knowing that solidarity, love, and dialogue" can bridge the greatest of divides.

Beyond the Briefs

To explore issues raised in these briefs in more detail, take a look at these articles (NonprofitWorld.org):

Sharpening Your Mission Statement (Vol. 35, No. 4)

Why Focus on Bequests? The Facts Tell the Story (Vol. 36, No. 4)

Creating a Values-Based Road Map (Vol. 23, No. 2)

Are You Offering People the Data They Want & Need? (Vol. 42, No. 4)

Grounded Visioning: A Quick Way to Create Shared Visions (Vol. 26, No. 4)

Will & Vision: Keys to Advancing Your Organization (Vol. 26, No. 2)

Hacking People: Why Your Biggest Vulnerability Isn't in Your IT Department (Vol. 37, No. 1)

Do You Have Strategic Pain Or a Strategic Plan? Answer These Questions to Find Out (Vol. 40, No. 1)

High-Impact, Low-Cost Ways to Drive Engagement (Vol. 42, No. 3)

Shape a Culture of Trust: The Foundation of a Successful Workplace (Vol. 41, No. 2)

Are You Prepared for a Cybersecurity Incident? (Vol. 42, No. 3)

Take It Up a Notch: Using Kaizen for Continuous Improvement (Vol. 37, No. 2)

Has Your Organization Lost Its Soul? (Vol. 28, No. 3)

The Best Leaders Are Servant Communicators (Vol. 43, No. 1)

Smart and Fast Are Not Enough: The Need for Better EQ (Vol. 29, No 1)

The Leadership Skill No One Talks About (Vol. 39, No. 4)

End Excuses, Add Action (Vol. 38, No. 2)

Your Mission Statement Has a Mission (Vol. 19, No. 5)

Are You Offering the Right Perks? (Vol. 35, No. 1)

Practices to Build Your Resilience (Vol. 42, No. 2)

How to Lead When Your Team Resists Change (Vol. 42, No. 4)

Cynicism Rx: Authentic Communication (Vol. 24, No. 6)

Expand Your Reach with Short-Form Videos (Vol. 41, No. 4)

Is Your Legacy Society Dreary Or Dynamic? (Vol. 40, No. 1)

What to Do When an Employee Becomes a Cybercriminal (Vol. 39, No. 4)

The Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Evolution (Vol. 30, No. 6)