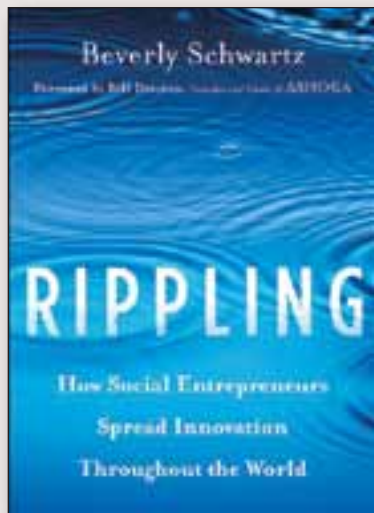


## The Ripple Effect of Social Entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurs are changemakers who confront issues undaunted by the way things are. Beginning with a clear picture of an end goal, they rethink solutions and restructure old patterns into new, socially beneficial norms of practice. They're what we often call visionaries.

In *Rippling: How Social Entrepreneurs Spread Innovation throughout the World* (published by Jossey-Bass, [jossybass.com](http://jossybass.com)), Beverly Schwartz defines social entrepreneurs as




those who develop “an organization or business based on a value proposition that delivers action on behalf of others.” In her book extolling social entrepreneurship, she reports on 18 Ashoka Fellows whose entrepreneurship rippled through society by influencing others.

These social entrepreneurs were able to spread sustainable change by shifting the frames in which problems were viewed, setting off waves of transformation. According to Schwartz, they had four common traits – purpose, passion, pattern, and participation.

Purpose and passion are personal drives. Participation means they inspired others. Pattern means understanding social systems in order to shift them toward problem solving.

To Schwartz, social entrepreneurship is about bringing new business opportunities into a theater of solutions, and about enabling participation in emerging new systems. She hopes the stories she tells will have a rippling effect by inspiring others to become social entrepreneurs and changemakers.

Here are some ways (adapted from the book) to think like a social entrepreneur:

- **Put your ideas and self out there.** Ask for feedback. Use people's suggestions to improve your idea. Share the idea again. Repeat the process till the actions you need to take are clarified in your own mind.
- **When looking for collaborators, start at the top,** working with the best people you can find.
- **Learn to observe** before taking sides or forming conclusions. Look for ways to implement strategies that are win-win situations for all.
- **Keep things moving.** Forge ahead boldly in the face of uncertainty.
- **Aspire to the highest level of change** you are able to tackle. Have a “nothing is impossible” attitude. Don't see problems, only solutions. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

## Donations Hit Record-Breaking High

Charitable giving rose by 4.1% last year, hitting a record high for the second year in a row, for a total of \$373.25 billion, according to *Giving USA 2016: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2015* ([givingusa.org](http://givingusa.org)).


Here's a breakdown by source of giving:

- **As in previous years, individuals** were the greatest source of all giving, generating 71% of donations and accounting for \$264.58 billion. That's 3.8% higher than 2014.
- **Foundation giving** stood at \$58.46 billion, an increase of 6.5%.
- **Charitable bequests** accounted for \$31.76 billion, which was 2.1% higher than 2014.
- **Corporate giving** stood at \$18.45 billion, an increase of 3.9%.

Melissa Brown of Giving USA noted that the category of “human services” ranked third in the amount of charitable donations received – the first time this category has ranked that high. That could be because there's still such need among nonprofits that help people who are still recovering from the recession, she said. But it also could be because human services nonprofits have gotten so much better at soliciting donations.


Here's the breakdown in amount of donations received:

- **Religion** got \$119.30 billion, an increase of 2.77%.
- **Education giving** increased to \$57.48 billion, 8.9% higher than the previous year.
- **Human services** received \$45.21 billion, a 4.2% increase.
- **Money contributed to foundations** decreased to an estimated \$42.26 billion, a 3.8% decline.
- **Health nonprofits** got \$29.81 billion, just 1.3% more than in 2014.
- **Public-society benefit**, a category that includes combined funds such as United Way and Jewish Federation campaigns, got \$26.95 billion. That's an increase of 6%.
- **Arts/culture/humanities** received an estimated \$17.07 billion, a 7% increase.
- **International affairs** saw the biggest percentage increase. The estimated \$15.75 billion was 17.5% higher than in 2014.
- **Environment/animals** got \$10.68 billion, up 6.2%.

“Studies show at least 60 percent of American households give to charity regularly. That's more than vote. That's more than read a daily newspaper,” said Brown. “When people in other countries hear about it, they're astounded. It's very distinctive.” 

## The Art of Continuous Disruption

In *Innovation Strategy* (published by Iuniverse, iuniverse.com), Howard Rasheed describes keys to creative leadership:

- **Anticipate a future of disruption.** Ask yourself: What disruptions have impacted your organization in the past 10 years? What were their causes? What trends will contribute to future disruptions? What do you think the next disruption will be?
- **Intentionally create disruption.** Take a systematic approach to exploring opportunities and acting on them. Rather than waiting for disruption to occur, accelerate innovation to keep ahead of the curve.
- **Inspire creative intelligence.** Serve as a pollinator of creativity among your stakeholders. Encourage individual creativity, which will evolve into a collective intelligence system.
- **Cultivate an innovation ecosystem.** Stimulate the creative intelligence of your stakeholders by creating a culture of new ideas. Encourage people to bring in ideas from many dissimilar fields and restructure them into new knowledge helpful to your markets.
- **Engage with collaborative technology.** Use models such as these:
  - **crowdsourcing**, in which you broadcast an open call for solutions to your problems
  - **crowdfunding**, which provides an online portal for raising funds
  - **group support systems**, which support people engaged in a common task and provide an interface to a shared environment.
  - **electronic brainstorming systems**, which allow people to interact, exchange ideas, identify solutions, and achieve consensus expeditiously.
- **Make innovation viral.** Ensure that innovation isn't an isolated event but an epidemic of positive change. While a viral campaign can be delivered by word of mouth, today it can spread much faster via the Internet. Take full advantage of online networks to spread your message and share information. 

## Let's Not Call It Diversity Training


You've read a lot about the importance of diversity in the workforce and board room. You've probably also heard that many diversity programs don't work (take a look, for example, at "The Failure of Diversity Training," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 18, No. 3, NonprofitWorld.org).

But what does work? What can you do to take advantage of the vital perspectives diversity offers?

In *Redirect* (Little, Brown & Co., littlebrown.com), Timothy D. Wilson provides answers based on extensive research into what works, what doesn't, and why. As he notes, rigorous testing finds that most diversity-training techniques are ineffective.

What separates programs that work from those that don't? One thing stands out: Effective programs increase contact between diverse groups. Bringing people together under the right conditions is the best way to solidify bonds between them so that they can learn from each other.

While we can't force people to hang out with those who are different from them, we can create as many opportunities as possible for them to do so. Using cooperative learning techniques, we can ask them to work together to solve problems and reach goals that are important to all of them. We can provide exercises to help people get to know one another better and see each person as a unique individual, thus breaking down stereotypes.


Creating teams with members of many diverse groups – in terms of age, race, gender, background, and so on – offers the perfect environment for diversity training. It's better if we don't call it by that name but, instead, let an appreciation for diversity come naturally as people work together toward common goals. 

## Solving Complex Problems

Applying systems thinking to nonprofit operations can be difficult while struggling to meet the demands of day-to-day activities. Conventional thinking is easier: Divide work into separate disciplines, optimize each, and problems will be resolved. Yet such linear thinking doesn't always work. To solve complex problems, you must understand how system elements interact and shift over time.

In *Systems Thinking for Social Change* (chelseagreen.com), David Peter Stroh suggests simplifying systems thinking into a four-stage process:

- **Ask stakeholders** about their readiness for change.
- **Help them face current reality** and their responsibility for having created it.
- **Help them make an explicit decision** about what they want.
- **Work with them to bridge the gap** between the current reality and their desires.

If you're frustrated with progress on challenges and truly wish to unravel them, you'll want to read this book. It can help you transform assumptions that keep you from resolving long-term, sticky problems. It will show you how to recognize unintended consequences, strengthen the networking necessary for meaningful progress, and discover the merits of patience to reach long-lasting solutions. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

## Do You Have a Plan A? Three Steps to the Future

Having a Plan A means understanding the leadership skills you'll need to achieve your strategic goals. A survey by Bridgespan (bridgespan.org) found that only 30% of nonprofit respondents had such a plan.

Here are three key steps (adapted from Bridgespan's *Plan A: How Successful Nonprofits Develop Their Future Leaders*) to develop such a road map:

### 1. Define the Leadership Capacities Needed to Fulfill Your Organization's Mission.

Ask yourself:

- **What will your organization's priorities be** during the next three to five years?
- **What organizational capabilities will be required** to achieve those priorities?
- **Which leadership roles** will help achieve those priorities?
- **What skills and competencies are critical** for these roles?

### 2. Assess Your Staff's Potential to Lead.


Decide whether your staff members have the potential to move into the necessary leadership roles. Consider how you can help them develop that potential. Move slowly but surely into encouraging them to take on more responsibility.

### 3. Create Your Plan A for What Leadership Teams within the Organization Will Look Like in Three Years.


Given your future needs and current staff, are you likely to have the leaders you need when you need them? Can you meet your needs through internal development, and will you need to hire from outside the organization as well?

To answer those questions, prepare your Plan A for the next three years. Pull together the information gathered in steps 1 and 2 above to identify staff with the potential to move into critical leadership positions.

Envision the team you need. Identify those who are ready to step into leadership roles. Pinpoint the competencies other staff members need to develop so that they can assume leadership roles in a few years. Prepare a plan to help them reach those goals.

Be ready to revise your plan as things change. The revision process itself can be valuable. It may highlight development needs and reveal weak pipelines for certain roles. Having a vision in place will let you build the most effective leadership team possible. 

## Keys to Successful Social Enterprise

After decades working with social enterprises, Jerr Boschee (jerrsjournal@gmail.com) has gathered his greatest lessons in *Jerr's Journals: My Adventures in Social Enterprise*. The book contains 44 stories delivered in Jerr's informal style. Each story begins with an episode from his life or from the world around us and gradually becomes a cautionary tale for social enterprises. His book is free for *Nonprofit World* readers to download at socialent.org. 

## Funding Secrets You Need to Know

The author of *Winning Foundation Grants* (published by Emerson and Church, emersonandchurch.com), Martin Teitel, is a now-retired foundation official who has also had experience working for a grant-seeking organization. In this book, he provides tips and candidly addresses commonly-held beliefs about grants and the people who award them.

While each foundation is different, Teitel acknowledges the power differential and how it affects the relationship between funders and grantees. He gives advice about cultivating relationships with grant makers, including when not to try too hard.

His advice ranges from the letter of inquiry phase, to making presentations to funders, to follow-up after a grant ends. He includes tips about what raises red flags with funders, common mistakes in proposals, and other things not to do.


As he explains, there are many myths about foundations, most of which make the job of fundraising harder than it has to be. All these myths have grains of truth, which he explores.

One myth, for instance, is that "funders don't care." It's true, he says, that funders don't care as much as you do about your proposal. That's why you need to find out what they *do* care about – what their mission is – and align it with yours.

Teitel always explains why grant makers do the things they do. Sometimes it *is* because of the power difference or a sense of self-importance. When that's so, Teitel isn't afraid to call out foundations.

The book is designed to help grant seekers achieve greater success, including deciding whether this form of fundraising is worth their effort. Even when it is, Teitel points out that diversifying grant seeking – and diversifying the entire fundraising program – will build a more sustainable and effective organization.

From his many years of reading and judging proposals, Martin Teitel knows what to eliminate from your proposal. Here are a few of his emphatic don'ts:

- **Never claim** to be unique.
- **Don't rely** on spell-check or the purported ability of spreadsheet programs to add up figures.
- **Never criticize** the competition.
- **Avoid** jokes, sarcasm, slang, and jargon.
- **Don't use** colored paper – or scented cover letters (yes, it has happened). 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

