



# FOR OUR 35TH ANNIVERSARY: 35 Ways to Enhance Your Life, Your Organization, & Your Leadership Prowess

Try a few of these today. Circle others to explore in the coming days, weeks, and months, and add them to your calendar so you don't forget.

**W**e've come a long way together since the first issue of *Nonprofit World* came out in May of 1983. Although things have changed, much remains evergreen. We've kept largely to our original departments and adhered to our philosophy of including articles that are practical and immediately useful.

One of our most popular features has always been "Five Things to Do Next Monday" (on page 2 of this issue), which consolidates each edition into actionable bites. Building on that idea, we've gathered 35 things you can do today, tomorrow, or in the coming weeks, garnered from recent issues of *Nonprofit World*. These small actions will move your organization forward, spark your creativity, and cement relationships. Adding a number of them together can lead to true and lasting change. Celebrate our anniversary with us by resolving to try as many as possible – and you needn't wait till Monday to get started.

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- 1 Write someone a thank-you note.** Sending an actual letter that you put in an envelope, stamp, and mail will impress the receiver with your sincerity and commitment. Think of someone who supports your organization, and express your true gratitude.
- 2 Imagine you're a detective,** and discover one new thing about each person you speak with today.
- 3 Check out YouTube's nonprofit program,** which lets you collect donations directly from your YouTube channel ([youtube.com/nonprofits](https://youtube.com/nonprofits)).
- 4 Naturalize your workplace.** Bring in flowers, a small fountain, plants, and/or paintings of natural settings. Give everyone the benefit of being closer to nature. It's good for the brain, mood, blood pressure, and stress level.
- 5 Invite the chair of your board to lunch.** You don't need any agenda. Just use it as an opportunity to talk face-to-face, one-on-one – the best way to build a relationship. And no relationship is more important to your organization as the one you have with your board chair.
- 6 Visit your website** as if for the first time. What's your first impression? Try donating a small amount, and see if the process is friendly and fluid. Consider small tweaks that will elevate your site to a new level.

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- 7 Schedule praise** the way you schedule meetings. Add a note to your calendar to compliment everyone in your sphere at least once a week.
- 8 Get staff members together and brainstorm ideas** for gaining more volunteers. Start with easy-to-implement ideas, like promoting a night for people to volunteer as a family. Pull out ideas that need time to develop, and add them to your strategic plans.
- 9 Carve out an hour** to do some reading in areas you haven’t explored before. Note connections to your own work, and jot down ideas that come to you.
- 10 Bring some healthy treats** such as nuts or fruit to the office for everyone to enjoy. Plan to pick up lunch for the next staff and board meetings. Sharing food is a proven way to build team spirit, and good nutrition improves productivity.
- 11 Give a self-assessment quiz** to your board, and discuss the results at the next board meeting. (See “How Effective Is Your Board? Rate Yourself, and Take Action,” Vol. 32, No. 2, NonprofitWorld.org.)
- 12 If you must say something negative** in a conversation or meeting, balance it with five positive statements. Studies show this “magic ratio” of 5:1 is the best way to motivate people, get your message across, and build connections.
- 13 Use moving graphics, such as GIFs** (Graphic Interchange Formats, GIF-Bitmap-CompuServe), in your online communications. GIFs – images that move just a bit – are compelling because they show rather than tell. They’re a great way to capture attention and build a social media following.
- 14 Set up an appointment** with your organization’s banker. If you don’t yet have a relationship with someone from your bank, it’s time to start one, and meet with that person regularly – at least once a year. Ask your banking partner for strategic advice and suggestions for ways to save and invest money, mitigate fraud, and make the most of your resources. If your bank isn’t nonprofit-friendly, find one that is.
- 15 Ask your coworkers** how they’re doing, what they’re working on, and if there’s anything you can do to make their work easier. This simple step has enormous power to boost productivity and morale.
- 16 Apply for a Google Grant**, which may provide you with a \$10,000-per-month Google AdWords budget.
- 17 Prepare a survey to learn your customers’ wants and needs.** To increase response, let them know in advance that the survey is coming, and explain why their input is crucial.
- 18 Practice being fully present** and nonjudgmental about what’s happening around you. Being open to your experience rather than imposing your opinions will bring fresh insights.
- 19 Get ready to take advantage** of #GivingTuesday (givingtuesday.org), which takes place on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. It’s the perfect day to kick up your social media presence. To learn how to get the most from this day devoted to charitable giving, see “Crowdfunding Success for #GivingTuesday and Year-End Fundraising: Six Key Steps” (Vol. 35, No. 3, Nonprofit World.org).
- 20 Start an organization-wide creative-failure list.** Ask people to write about projects that didn’t turn out as hoped and describe what they learned. Then hold a discussion so everyone can learn from these creative lessons.
- 21 Connect with your organization’s supporters** on several social media channels. You may want to do a little research first to see which channels – Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, Pheed, Thumb, Instagram, Flickr, Flipboard, and so on – are most popular with your supporters and prospects.
- 22 Identify the 10 donors who gave the most last year** but haven’t yet given this year – and go see them. Find out what’s on their minds and ask them to support you this year. There’s nothing like in-person meetings to solidify relationships.
- 23 Register with AmazonSmile** (org.amazon.com) so that whenever anyone buys something through Amazon, they can choose to donate 0.5% of the purchase price to your organization.
- 24 In all your conversations today, practice deep listening.** Don’t think of what you want to say but, instead, listen for the emotions and meaning behind people’s words and body language. Ask questions and search for understanding rather than trying to get your own ideas across. Practice empathy by putting yourself in the other person’s shoes. Empathy is the leader’s greatest resource.

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**25 Be sure your board and staff members have a concise response** (no more than 30 seconds) they can give when someone asks, “What does your organization do?”

**26 Call someone you haven’t talked to in a while.** You can discuss a problem you’re wrestling with or simply chat. Just hearing a new “voice” will awaken your mind and stimulate all kinds of exciting new ideas.

**27 Ask your board members to add board service to their social profiles.** It’s an easy way to give your organization more visibility. Whenever possible, give board members updates about your organization to send to their social media network.

**28 Take time** for reflection. Whether you take a 15-minute walk or find a quiet place to close your eyes for a few minutes, build this time into your day. Add it to your calendar. You need this time to reset your brain with no distractions. Use the time to ask yourself the big questions about what changes you’d like to make, what dreams you have for your organization’s future, and what opportunities might be disguising themselves as problems.

**29 Remember that your top donors are the key to your organization’s success.** Make a resolution to visit at least one major donor every week. At these visits, seek to understand your donor’s needs, wishes, and vision.

**30 Ask staff members** what kinds of education and training opportunities they would most like to receive. Offer a wide array of possibilities – workshops on creativity, classes on computer skills, attendance at conferences, self-improvement opportunities, whatever will most inspire, refresh, and motivate them.

**31 Add some apps to manage your social media efforts.** Some to try: Buffer ([bufferapp.com](http://bufferapp.com)) helps you post your social media content over time rather than all at once; you can store up content to be released at later times. Hootsuite ([hootsuite.com](http://hootsuite.com)) provides a dashboard where you can see all your social media content at the same time. Mention ([mention.com](http://mention.com)) lets you track trends and receive evaluation of your social media posts.

**32 Hold standing or walking meetings,** and hold them outside whenever possible. We all spend far too much time sitting indoors, which isn’t good for our physical, mental, or emotional health. Standing and walking improve attention and recall. Being outside

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sets our circadian rhythm, which helps us sleep, and sleep deficiency is a major cause of poor performance and impaired decision making. Walking outdoors while you meet will improve engagement, productivity, and morale, while giving people “permission” to work a little differently.

**33 Make sure your board members embrace their role as the organization’s fiduciary guardians.** Ask them if they’d like more training on fiscal matters. Check out “Do Your Board Members Know Their Fiduciary Responsibilities?” (Vol. 33, No. 1, [NonprofitWorld.org](http://NonprofitWorld.org)).

**34 Join the Dream Corp’s #lovearmy** ([thedreamcorps.org/lovearmy](http://thedreamcorps.org/lovearmy)), designed to help us support one another and work across differences.

**35 Start a group of like-minded professionals** who can advise you, commiserate in tough times, and celebrate successes. Resolve to get together with them monthly. 



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