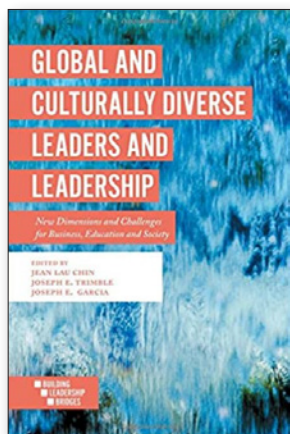


The Power of the Culturally Diverse Leader


Leadership models have long been rooted in Western traditions, bound by time, place, gender bias, and ethnocentricity. Most such models are inadequate in today's multicultural contexts. They don't prepare us to lead in diverse human environments in which adapting is the norm. Current leadership studies tend to focus on *how* to lead; we can learn much from traditions that include *what* to lead toward.



The effects of globalization are evident even in relatively isolated communities and will only grow. *Global and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership* (emeraldinsight.com) examines culturally-based models, not to compare one against the other but to explain how they can become complementary.

Efforts to reduce complexity won't make the world less complex. Most Western-taught organizations, including nonprofits, look to individual leaders for goals and often find that this "heroic" leadership isn't up to the task. More heterogeneous models of leadership are needed.

“Efforts to reduce complexity won't make the world less complex.”

This book demonstrates the responsibility nonprofit organizations have as community gathering places to understand how we shape values, goals, and interdisciplinary approaches to leadership. The book's authors offer examples that will open conversations about a more balanced view of leadership. Their approaches are designed to help us develop skills across a wide range of situations and to resolve wicked, hard, and interconnected social problems. Their insights catalyze reflection about how to change attitudes and behaviors that will develop more inclusive leadership. 

—reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

2022 Trendspotting: What's New in Fundraising & How Should That Change Your Plans?

Nonprofits of all sizes saw positive growth in online and monthly donations last year. According to research reported by Jackie Sue Griffin (jsg-associates.com), one-time and monthly online donations jumped more than 15% and online giving

increased by 20.7%, with small nonprofits growing their online fundraising by as much as 22% compared to the year before.

How can giving trends help you with your 2022 plans? Here are some growth trends and actions to consider:

Optimize for mobile. Research reveals that donations made on mobile devices are on the rise. A whopping 80.69% of people around the world have smartphones, and mobile phone users generated 54.25% of internet traffic last year, beating out desktop users. Therefore, optimizing the mobile experience is key to engaging your donors. The improvements you make to your mobile donation platform could include interactive experiences, seamless mobile layouts, and simplified yet visually engaging donation forms.

Offer a monthly recurring donation option. Monthly giving programs appeal to donors because of the convenience. In addition, monthly billing gives people a better sense of control over their spending and thus feels more affordable. Monthly


“List the benefits, emphasizing affordability and convenience.”

payments lead to higher retention rates and help you build better relationships with donors.

Encourage people to join your monthly giving program by listing the benefits, emphasizing affordability and convenience. Quote existing monthly donors on their reasons for donating monthly. Give people a convenient way to access a monthly giving option: Prominently place a button on your site's navigation bar and a link in all e-mail signatures.

Convert first-time donors. The increase in first-time donors tells us that more people are giving. One-time donors can be motivated to the next level of stewardship by expressing gratitude and giving them meaningful reasons to return.

When communicating your appreciation, make it authentic and personal. Show the impact of people's one-time donation by letting them know where the money goes.

Leverage these insights from researchers to make 2022 your most successful fundraising year yet! 

How to Gain the Feedback You Need

How you receive feedback and what you do with it are instrumental to your growth and leadership prowess. *Influence Redefined* by Stacey Hanke (Greenleaf Book Group Press, gbgpress.com) sets out ways to be sure you obtain meaningful feedback:

Seize everyday opportunities. Ask for feedback during or right after each conversation you have, in person, on the phone, and via e-mail. It's important to receive input as soon as possible so you can process it. The immediacy of feedback is integral to its effectiveness.

Don't fall for fake or sugarcoated feedback. Comments such as “Wonderful job!” or “You were great!” are worse than

“Comments such as “Wonderful job!” are worse than useless.”


useless. Resist the urge to feel flattered by such fluff, and let people know that’s not what you’re looking for.

Insist on open, candid, honest feedback. People won’t give such feedback unless they’re sure that you’ll reward rather than punish them for it.

Monitor your response. When receiving feedback, fight the urge to be defensive or make excuses. Even if you disagree with the input, thank the person and leave it at that.

Clarify. Summarize what you’ve heard to be sure you’re understanding the feedback you’ve received.

Ask someone you trust to help you. Before an interaction (meeting, presentation, face-to-face or virtual conversation), ask this person to watch for specific behaviors you’d like to improve (“I’m trying to make my e-mails clear and concise. Please let me know if my writing is unclear or confusing.”)

Videotape yourself next time you give a speech, facilitate a meeting, or present an idea. Then play back and analyze the tape. It’s the best way to see yourself as others see you. 

A Place to Be

Every organization has a culture. Weak leaders tend to ignore the culture and let it evolve without planning or input. Effective leaders spend time crafting a culture that’s generative and empowering. In such cultures, there’s a resiliency in the face of challenges, as Gordon Smith tells us in *Institutional Intelligence* (InterVarsity Press, ivpress.com). He describes the leaders of such cultures as having institutional intelligence – an awareness of the vital importance of an organization’s character.

Space and the use of space matter. Institutional intelligence includes spacial awareness: understanding, as Smith words it, “how an institution is housed and functions within built space.” Effective leaders know that a well designed place can foster good work and encourage everyone to be adaptive and innovative, able to handle change, crisis, and new challenges.

There are many things you can do to improve your current location or find a new spot that’s more consistent with your organization’s ethos. Start with these questions:

Does your building reflect and reinforce your organization’s identity and mission? Does it foster the relationships and connections you hope to encourage? Is it the right size, not too small or too large for its purposes?

Is your building located on a site that makes sense for it, whether that’s in the city or suburbs, an industrial zone, a community, or a country setting?


How is the building oriented toward the sun? Does it bring in enough light? Does it provide views of trees, plants, the natural environment?

Is the place welcoming and accessible? Are the signs easy for a diversity of newcomers to read and understand? Are transition spaces, such as hallways, entryways, and stairways, inviting rather than intimidating?

Are there gathering spaces for small groups to meet? Are there quiet spaces where people can reflect in stillness?

Is there a minimum of clutter? Are spaces organized with clarity, simplicity, and open lines?


Are the details of the building – windows, frames, doors, handles – visually satisfying, logical, and consistent with the organization’s purpose?

Have you considered color, texture, landscaping, public art, and the power of natural light? The authors of *A Pattern Language* note that buildings that displace natural light as the main source of illumination “are not fit places to spend the day.” 

A Networking Self-Analysis

Relationship-building is vital to your – and your organization’s – success. Luckily, it’s a skill you can learn. Use this quiz to rate your networking skills and pinpoint areas where you can improve. Respond with 1 (for not at all) to 5 (all the time):

- I have long-term networking goals.
- I block out time for networking in my weekly schedule.
- I live by the “givers gain” philosophy, performing favors to others before asking anything from them.
- I have an organized contact-management system.
- I follow up within 24 hours with an e-mail or other brief communication whenever I meet a new contact.
- I listen carefully, ask lots of questions, and learn as much as I can about the person I’m meeting.
- I express gratitude at every opportunity.
- I look for chances to help others, whether it’s pitching in with an office move or sharing useful articles to advance someone’s interests.
- I set up appointments to get better acquainted with people and learn as much about them as possible.
- I have a very diverse personal network (people from differing professions, ethnicities, ages, and so on).
- I keep in contact with people from organizations I used to belong to.
- I make sure that all my family members can explain what I do for a living and what the core purpose of my organization is.
- I’m an active member of a chamber of commerce.
- I host an event for the people in my network several times a year.
- I make a practice of asking for feedback.
- I send thank-you cards regularly.

You’ll find a more complete list in *The 29% Solution* (Greenleaf Book Group Press, gbgpress.com). 

How to Have a Good Idea

Almost everyone has been struck by an “aha” moment that seems to come out of the blue. The good news is that you can increase the chances of having such experiences. The authors of *The Eureka Factor* (Random House, atrandom.com) tell you how:

Get in the mood. Insights come most readily when you’re alone, relaxed, and in a positive frame of mind. One study found a strong correlation between people feeling happy at work and making important breakthroughs the following day. The more you can cultivate peace of mind and keep anxiety at bay, the more likely you are to have a eureka moment.

Do your homework. Even though an insight may arise suddenly and unexpectedly, it’s based on things you already know. When you want a breakthrough idea, first gain as much knowledge as possible of the subject.

Combine modes of thinking. Creative insight and analytical thinking complement each other. After you have an insight, you usually need to analyze and refine it before it’s ready to implement. And when you reach an impasse when thinking analytically, it helps to take a break and let your unconscious mind work on the problem. Alternating between these two modes of thought is a powerful way to reach workable solutions.


Deprive your senses. Many creative thinkers use sensory deprivation to help them focus inwardly and eliminate distractions. Jonathan Franzen, for example, wears earplugs and a blindfold when he sits down at the computer to write. Others get their best ideas in the shower, where the white noise of rushing water and the lack of too much visual input help them disengage from the outer world.

Keep a notepad (or recorder) next to your bed. Some of the most innovative thoughts arise during sleep. It’s important to capture them at once so they don’t slip away.

Stay in bed a little longer in the morning. Don’t jump right up. Many people who’ve been struggling to solve a problem report finding the answer shortly after waking.

Experience variety. The more different things you’re exposed to, the more likely that something will trigger a solution.

Go on vacation. Getting away from your routine can boost your insightfulness. The more exotic the locale, the better.

Or if you can’t go on vacation, daydream. Studies show that daydreaming triggers creative thought. And you’ll spark your brain more if the daydream is about a place that’s as different as possible from your usual experiences. 

Coming to Grips with Diverse Cultures

Because all organizations contain cultural diversity, anyone can benefit from the wisdom in *The Culture Solution* by Deirdre B. Mendez (deirdremendez.com, nicholasbrealey.com). As she explains, we all operate according to cultural scripts, unconsciously replicating the patterns we’ve learned from the people around us. It’s vital to understand how your cultural script differs from that of people from other backgrounds.

Consider the case of a group of Japanese men who came to a presentation in the U.S. and then slept through the whole


thing. They were exhausted from working around the clock, but their culture considers it more respectful to sleep during a meeting than to skip it altogether. What they consider a sign of respect, those from the U.S. interpret as an insult – unless they’re culturally literate.

Mendez describes how to analyze your own cultural profile and the profiles of others so that you can communicate in ways that will resonate with them. Some examples:

Traditional U.S. culture encourages direct communication, but many other cultures prefer to be indirect. In contacts with such people, Mendez suggests the following: Suggest opinions instead of expressing them forthrightly. Avoid confrontation. Imply criticism rather than stating it directly.

Many cultures favor undemonstrative rather than expressive communication. What to do in these cases: Present proposals in a calm, unemotional manner. Maintain the appearance of emotional detachment from your ideas. Show self-control in emotional situations.

Some cultures prioritize networks over processes. In such situations: Don’t rush discussions. Indicate that an improved relationship is your ultimate goal. Emphasize mutual gain.

Few people have received the training needed for cultural competence. This thorough, engaging book will fill that gap. It will help you look beyond your own biases so that you don’t mistake cultural scripts for individual traits. It will show you how to manage conflict, build relationships, and improve collaboration across the full cultural spectrum. 

For another take on the theme of culture, see “Do You Need a Translator? Make Sure People Understand Your Message” (Vol. 36, No. 1) at NonprofitWorld.org.

Beyond the Briefs

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

- How Mobile Marketing Can Work for You** (Vol. 32, No. 4)
- Counteract Stress to Make the Best Decisions** (Vol. 28, No. 1)
- Employee Feedback Is No Longer Optional: Satisfying a Demand for Dialogue** (Vol. 39, No. 3)
- Four Steps to Effective Networking** (Vol. 30, No. 1)
- Making Real Estate Work for Nonprofits** (Vol. 26, No. 2)
- Outside the Comfort Zone** (Vol. 25, No. 3)
- Nonprofit Doesn’t Have to Mean Noncomfortable** (Vol. 18, No. 2)
- What Followers Want from Leaders: Capitalizing on Diversity** (Vol. 25, No. 5)
- Why Clutter Hurts Your Leadership & What to Do About It** (Vol. 36, No. 1)
- Is Your Organization Culturally Competent?** (Vol. 26, No. 6)
- How to Use Real Estate as a Strategic Tool** (Vol. 22, No. 6)
- Creating a Climate for Innovation** (Vol. 29, No. 4)
- Revitalize Your Thank-You Letter with a Good Story** (Vol. 37, No. 2)
- Seven Ways to Be Unreasonable** (Vol. 20, No. 5)
- Get Closer to Supporters than Ever Before** (Vol. 39, No. 2)