

Sept / Oct 2012

# Nonprofit World

Advancement  
Through  
Sharing

What to Do *Before* a Long-Term  
Leader Departs

Advancing the Nonprofit Sector  
Together for 30 Years  
(Looking Ahead to the Next 30)

## PLUS

---

Push the Clear Button to  
Eliminate Stress

---

Improve Your Special Events

---

Overcome Barriers to  
Planning

---

Writing Well by Doing *Less*:  
A Five-Step Plan

---

A New Way to Think about  
Change

---

How to Track Employee  
Benefit Eligibility: Three  
Solutions to a Tricky Topic

---

And Much More!

Published by the

 **SOCIETY** for  
**NONPROFITS**  
Advancing the nonprofit world together  
for **30 YEARS.**

# irwin siegel agency inc.

INSURANCE PROGRAMS & RISK MANAGEMENT



## Protecting those who do amazing work in our communities.

So many people rely on the services you provide. Irwin Siegel Agency has built a legacy of providing insurance and risk management solutions specifically for social and human service providers. We know insurance is often another item to work into your budget, but when you're insured with us, you'll receive complimentary Risk Management services, claims expertise, online training and free and discounted partners services. We'll gladly work with your local agent/broker to design an insurance program to fit *your* needs.

SOCIAL/HUMAN SERVICES  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
BEHAVIORAL/MENTAL HEALTHCARE  
COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCIES  
ADDICTION TREATMENT

HOME HEALTHCARE & HOSPICE  
YOUTH/CHILDREN'S SERVICES  
FOSTER CARE/ADOPTION  
CASA ORGANIZATIONS  
PARATRANSIT

CYBER LIABILITY  
DIRECTORS & OFFICERS  
VOLUNTEER ACCIDENT  
POLLUTION  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION



800.622.8272



[www.siegelagency.com](http://www.siegelagency.com)



[siegel@siegelagency.com](mailto:siegel@siegelagency.com)

*Supporting Those Who Support Others™*

ACNPW 0914

## NONPROFIT WORLD

Editor Jill Muehrcke

## SOCIETY FOR NONPROFITS

President Katie Burnham Laverty

Membership Director Jason Chmura

### Board Members

Diane M. Hults

Baker Tilly Virchow Krause, LLP  
Southfield, Michigan

David Magidson

Wayne State University  
Detroit, Michigan

Katie Burnham Laverty

Society for Nonprofits  
Livonia, Michigan

### Editorial Advisory Board Members

Jerr Boschee

Executive Director, The Institute for Social  
Entrepreneurs  
Dallas, Texas

Emily Davis

EDA Consulting  
Boulder, Colorado

Ramon Del Castillo

Metropolitan State College of Denver  
Denver, Colorado

Susan J. Ellis

President, Energize, Inc.  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Hannah Gregory

Shoestring (the nonprofit's agency)  
Gardiner, Maine

Bruce Glasrud

Third Sector Horizons  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Amy Good

Urban League of Greater Madison  
Madison, Wisconsin

Tangie Newborn

President, Immense Business Solutions  
Washington, D.C.

### Advertising

Gretchen Christensen,

Advertising Sales Manager/Marketing Consultant  
(Office) 1-888-822-3102, (cell) 1-989-274-8266

gretchen@villagepress.com

Village Press, Inc.

2779 Aero Park Dr., Traverse City, MI 49686

### Publisher

The Society for Nonprofits

Purpose: The Society for Nonprofits is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization. Through Nonprofit World and other communications with its members, the Society is dedicated to bringing together those who serve the nonprofit world in order to build a strong network of professionals throughout the country.

NONPROFIT WORLD is published bi-monthly at the subscription price of \$79 per year by The Society For Nonprofits. Single copies are available, prepaid, at \$15 per copy. NONPROFIT WORLD is available at no charge to members of The Society for Nonprofits. To subscribe or to become a member of the Society, write: The Society for Nonprofits, P.O. Box 510354, Livonia, Michigan 48151. Telephone: 734-451-3582. Organizational Membership \$150. Individual \$69. E-Membership \$49. Organizational members may purchase additional memberships for their board, staff, and volunteers at \$25/membership/year. Change of address: Send both new and old address, with mailing label if possible, to: The Society For Nonprofits, P.O. Box 510354, Livonia, Michigan 48151. Allow six weeks for corrections. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission. All rights reserved. Copyright © The Society For Nonprofits ISSN 8755-7614. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Society for Nonprofits, P.O. Box 510354, Livonia, Michigan 48151. E-mail: [info@NonprofitWorld.org](mailto:info@NonprofitWorld.org). Web page: [nonprofitworld.org](http://nonprofitworld.org).

# contents

September/October 2012



### NEW LOGO

The Society is celebrating its 30th year, and we've had a bit of a makeover! We're shortening our name from the Society for Nonprofit Organizations to the Society for Nonprofits and unveiling a new logo. Its symbolism remains similar to the logo we've had since May of 1983. It represents the overarching goal of the Society — to unify diverse segments of the nonprofit world, to draw them together, to create a dynamic whole without losing their individuality — and to move forward into the future together.

### ARTICLES

- 14 **What to Do Before a Long-Term Leader Departs**  
By Priscilla Rosenwald
- 18 **Change or Perish: The Future Is Guaranteed to No one**  
By Stephen Long  
You need a whole new way of thinking.
- 20 **How to Track Employee Benefit Eligibility: Three Solutions to a Tricky Topic**  
By John Foucault
- 22 **Writing Well by Doing Less: A Five-Step Plan**  
By Tijana Salaj
- 24 **Push the Clear Button to Eliminate Stress**  
By Don Joseph Goewey

### DEPARTMENTS

- 2 **Editor's Page Are You Tending Your Fires?**  
By Jill Muehrcke
- 2 **Five Things to Do Next Monday**
- 4 **Food for Thought I've Been Thinking about ... Finding & Keeping Good People**  
By Martha Golensky
- 6 **Fundraising Forum Improve Your Special Events**  
By William Smialek  
Success may require a change in strategy.
- 7 **Creative Fundraising Ideas**  
Break a record. Be pet smart. Put on a stylish show.
- 8 **The Board Room Barriers to Strategic Planning and How to Transcend Them**  
By Lisa Dahmus & Lynn Perry Wooten  
A new study uncovers ways to surmount strategic planning's major roadblocks.
- 12 **Legal Counsel What You Need to Know about Sexual Harassment**  
By Kendrick Kleiner  
Understanding sexual harassment is crucial to assure a productive workplace and avoid lawsuits.
- 25 **Advertiser's Index**
- 26 **Relevant Reviews Finding Comfort in the Hot Zone**  
By Terrence Fernsler
- 27 **Nonprofit Briefs**  
The power of mentors. Plus other tips, research, and publications in the nonprofit sector.

Unsolicited manuscripts and letters to the editor are welcomed. They should be addressed to Jill Muehrcke, Editor, *Nonprofit World*, P.O. Box 44173, Madison, WI 53744-4173 or [muehrcke@charter.net](mailto:muehrcke@charter.net) or [jill@snpo.org](mailto:jill@snpo.org).

# Are You Tending Your Fires?



“All of life is your practice field.”

**K**nowing how to lead when times are good isn't enough. You must be ready to lead through the heat of conflict, tension, and chaos. You need to be a fire tender, as Larry Dressler explains in *Standing in the Fire* (turn to page 26 for a review of this insightful book).

To tame the blaze of controversy, you need to practice exposing yourself to the heat, little by little. Dressler uses the analogy of an allergy. If you're like

most of us, you avoid certain people, ideas, and experiences as if you were allergic to them. Instead, you must expose yourself to what makes you uncomfortable. You need to encourage diversity, understanding that with difference comes both conflict and creativity. With practice, you'll learn to stand in the heat, defuse problems, and nurture the creative spark.

As a fire tender, you'll often face the intensity of scorching disputes, and your job is to direct people's passion toward productive, innovative conclusions. Doing so means putting aside long-held beliefs about what it means to be a "real leader" — the take-charge person with all the answers — and recognizing your own journey of self-discovery as your most essential tool.

The secret to becoming an effective change agent is to attend to your own hearth: Be aware of what's going on inside you so that you can help the right things unfold outside yourself (take a look at "Notice Your Body" on page 26 and "Push the Clear Button to Eliminate Stress" on page 24).

To be ready for incendiary moments, you need to develop solid habits of mind, heart, and body — daily practices that strengthen mental, emotional, and physical self-awareness — under less intense conditions. For some ideas, see "Nourish the Leader in You" (page 26).

Some of the most explosive moments in an organization's lifeline occur during transitions, especially when a leader leaves. Unless you've planned well for the successions of your board chair and executive director, your organization can go up in flames. There's no job more important than creating transition strategies, and Priscilla Rosenwald provides the keys on page 14.

Honing your communication skills is a vital way to prepare for high-heat situations. "How to Have a Difficult Conversation" (page 28) provides a tool for communicating calmly and clearly in highly charged situations. "Change or Perish" (page 18) underlines the fact that most leaders underestimate the amount of communication that's needed — especially when initiating a change.

Writing is a powerful vehicle not only to communicate with others but to explore yourself, your ideas, and your inner capacities. Every time you write something, you learn more about the world and yourself. "Writing Well by Doing Less: A Five-Step Plan" (page 22) will help you write quickly and effectively.

When you want to see a problem from a new perspective, you need to look outside your customary field of vision. Having a wide range of mentors will help you see challenges in different slants so that you can reframe them for others in compelling ways (see "The Power of Mentors" on page 27).

A small change in strategy can be the difference between success and failure. "Improve Your Special Events" (page 6) elucidates what you can gain by shifting your frame of reference just a little bit.

Learning isn't an activity so much as an attitude, as Dressler's book makes clear. The best kind of learning involves coming to know your thought patterns, physical sensations, and emotional landscape. All of life is your practice field.

*Jill Muehrcke*

Jill Muehrcke, [jill@NonprofitWorld.org](mailto:jill@NonprofitWorld.org)



P.S. As we celebrate our 30th year, we're making some changes at the Society — shortening our name from the Society for Nonprofit Organizations to the **Society for Nonprofits** and changing our Web address to **NonprofitWorld.org**. (We'll continue to keep and support [www.snpo.org](http://www.snpo.org) for those of you who have it bookmarked or linked.) We're freshening the layout and design of the magazine and Web site. And we have a new logo (see above). E-mail me at [jill@NonprofitWorld.org](mailto:jill@NonprofitWorld.org) to let me know what you think! 

## Five Things to Do Next Monday

1. **Prepare a quick presentation** you can give whenever someone asks about your organization ("I'm Sorry, You Have Two Minutes," page 27).
2. **Make sure** your organization doesn't display any of the harbingers in "Warning Signs" (page 16).
3. **Give board members** copies of the article on pages 8-10 for them to discuss at their next meeting.
4. **Check the list of practices** in "Nourish the Leader in You" (page 26). Select a practice that you feel motivated to learn, and commit to performing it for ten minutes each day.
5. **Assess your approach to special events** with the tips on pages 6-7.

# Does Your Organization's Communications + Branding Need a Nonprofit Super Hero?



**ShoestringAgency.org**  
**1-888-835-6236**

**Then you need SHOESTRING (the nonprofit's agency).**

We exclusively serve and specialize in meeting the needs of nonprofits — and we do so at discounted rates (with no strings attached).

From full communications audits and rebrandings to national public relations campaigns — we proudly serve nonprofits (affordably) from Maine to California (and everywhere in between).

Contact us for more information and an estimate that meets your nonprofit's budget: [heroes@shoestringagency.org](mailto:heroes@shoestringagency.org).

**branding • strategy • messaging • media relations • design • digital PR**

# I've Been Thinking About . . . Finding & Keeping Good People

## How can you be sure you hire the best people? How can you keep them happy?

By Martha Golensky

**A** dedicated workforce is your most critical resource. It's too important to leave to HR specialists. Even if your organization is large enough to have an HR department, you and other organizational leaders must stay involved.

Successful nonprofit managers find ways to bring the best people aboard. They're also mindful of what it takes to retain those people. Staff turnover's expensive. It's not just the costs of replacing an employee that can destabilize your organization. In addition, clients may be inconvenienced when a staff member leaves. Other employees may feel a sense of loss, diminishing their performance.

In an organization where I was a program director, cronyism influenced many personnel decisions. I was the unfortunate beneficiary of one of the CEO's "reclamation projects" when he hired someone at a friend's request and assigned him to my department. Although it quickly became obvious the man not only was unqualified but also had a drinking problem, it wasn't until he caused an embarrassing scene at the annual dinner that he was let go. Employee morale suffered greatly.

In addition to high staff turnover and low morale, poor personnel choices can lead to lawsuits by disgruntled employees and ex-employees. Litigation can have a devastating effect on your bottom line and your organization's reputation.

How do you find and keep the right people? Step #1 is to make sure you have up-to-date job descriptions for all positions. Be sure these descriptions include the desired characteristics and qualifications of the person to fill each slot. Lay out clear hiring guidelines that are fair and meet all legal requirements, and be consistent when implementing them.


You also need to put careful thought into your hiring procedures. Who will be involved in hiring decisions? How will you advertise openings? How will the process unfold? Establish rating criteria to distinguish the best applicants from the others. Be sure to follow the same interview protocol for all candidates. Think of employee recruitment and selection as public relations for your organization, and put your best foot forward.

Although some nonprofits use standardized tests to gauge knowledge, personality, and technical ability, nothing replaces a well-crafted interview for exploring candidates' past experience and the likelihood they'll fit in. Avoid simple informational questions. You'll gain more valuable insights by asking applicants how they would handle hypothetical but likely situations, such as the loss of a major funder or revamping a program that isn't pulling its weight. Before making a job offer, do a thorough background and reference check.

Perhaps the most important hiring and retention questions are these: Do employees' beliefs mesh with your organization's values? Do their jobs meet expectations? To get a better sense of what people want from the work they do, consider Edgar Schein's concept of career anchors. Everyone, he says, has a list of basic needs. But for each person, one of these needs is more important than the others, and that primary need will anchor the person to a particular job.

For example, someone whose main need is for safety will be happier in a stable, secure job than in a career that's riskier and less predictable. People who put autonomy first will look for employment that lets them work alone and make their own rules.

Workers who want lifestyle balance will seek out jobs that let them have flexible hours and a full life outside of work. Those who are service-oriented care more about making a difference than making a big paycheck.

If people's basic needs aren't met, they won't find their work rewarding and are unlikely to stay long. If they do stay, their unhappiness will lower overall morale and productivity. Match their needs with their jobs from the start, and you'll have a workforce you can count on for the long term. 

“Do employees' beliefs mesh with your organization's values?”

### REFERENCES

- \*Bergeron, Carol, "Hiring a Concern? Learn What Talent Magnets Do," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 24, No. 5.
- \*Ellner, Michele, "Take the Gamble Out of Hiring with Assessments," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 25, No. 4.
- \*Everton, Wendy, "Keeping Your Best and Brightest Workers," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 28, No. 6.
- \*Lemberg, Paul & Tom Matzen, "Regular People, Spectacular Results," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 23, No. 4.
- Schein, Edgar, *Career Anchors: Self-Assessment*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, [www.careeranchorsonline.com](http://www.careeranchorsonline.com).
- \*Starred references are available at [NonprofitWorld.org/members](http://NonprofitWorld.org/members).

Martha Golensky, professor emerita of social work at Grand Valley State University ([golenskm@gvsu.edu](mailto:golenskm@gvsu.edu)) is the author of *Strategic Leadership and Management in Nonprofit Organizations: Theory and Practice*, published by Lyceum Books, which draws on her 30-year career as a nonprofit executive, professor of nonprofit management, and consultant to local nonprofits on strategic planning, financial development, and board governance.

# Your #1 Source for **CAUSE MERCHANDISE**

FUNDRAISING ITEMS  
 RETAIL ITEMS FOR WEBSITES  
 GIVEAWAYS / PREMIUMS  
 CUSTOM MERCHANDISE  
 OVER 2,000 ITEMS - WHOLESALE PRICES



Paper Ribbons



Pens



Bracelets



Stickers



Sweatbands



Shoe Laces



Magnets



Ribbon Pins



Stress Balls



Note Cards



Mugs



Charms



Lanyards



Angel Pins



Rings



Visors/Hats



Bracelets



Tote Bags



Balloons



Silicone Bracelets

**SAVE 10%** ON YOUR ORDER - COUPON CODE: NPWORLD

Expires 12/31/12, One Per Customer



[www.FundraisingForACause.com](http://www.FundraisingForACause.com)  
**1 (800) 519-2814**

# Improve Your Special Events

## Success may require a change in strategy.

By William Smialek

**T**he fundraiser's rule of thumb is that a viable fundraising event should net at least 50% of gross receipts. In today's climate, it's becoming increasingly difficult to meet this goal.

Some nonprofits believe the solution is to raise ticket prices, find more sponsors, and hold more events. Many post-event evaluations conclude not with robust plans for improvement but a pledge to follow the same basic plan with greater zeal.

In an unpredictable economy, however, this strategy is unlikely to increase revenues. To understand why, consider the three pillars that support the success of an event – and the problems associated with each one:

**1. Corporate sponsors and vendors.** Sponsorships are becoming harder to obtain. Today's businesses are unlikely to sponsor an event unless they receive a comparable return on investment, including targeted recognition of their support. In some cases, securing more sponsorships can actually escalate event costs, with no net increase in charitable gifts.

**2. Volunteers.** Keeping the participation and enthusiasm of these workers requires staff training and planning. Loss of this workforce – they are elderly or have relocated – can weaken the event. It can also scramble the social networking that generated past attendance.

**3. Constituents who attend the event.** These people can be quite fickle. Their attendance may wane unless the activity is kept novel.

“Securing more sponsorships can actually escalate event costs.”

“Event-goers can be quite fickle.”

### Why not have more events?

In some cases, holding more events may be an option. Adding a different activity lets you reach a different group. Adding an event at a different location may be worthwhile if you serve a broad geographic area.

But multiple events targeted at the same constituent group have a limited impact. Most donors commit to a level of giving that will only be divided among events. In the case of a small nonprofit, adding events stretches staff capacity. The return on investment of time and effort won't be justified.

### Should we change direction?

A conceptual shift can make all the difference. First, consider your event less as a fundraiser and more as a relationship builder. Second, focus on the reason for each person's charitable giving.

Boards seldom consider why people support a special event. They assume it's because of a belief in the nonprofit's mission. But that's only one of many motivations.

As fundraisers, we should consider psychological research into giving. One major reason people join a cause is as an identity symbol.<sup>1</sup> They hope to be grouped socially with other supporters, often specific individuals in the community.

Pursuit of status is an undercurrent in all successful charity events. Status seekers support causes to develop new social and business relationships. They then engage in “competitive altruism” or “strategic generosity” with these new contacts.

Focusing on the psychology of philanthropy will be more productive than increasing the number of events. Here are some helpful approaches:

- **When recognizing corporate sponsors,** include the names of key executives. In any community, certain philanthropists are publicly linked to corporate resources. Announcing their names will fulfill their need for recognition. It will also satisfy your supporters' desire to be identified with people of status.
- **Do research on those who have attended your events in the past.** Discuss what you and others in your organization know about them. Discover what other causes they support. Consider their possible motivations for attending your events. You may need to dig deeply to uncover this information. For instance, connections related to social status can be hidden behind church relations or the ethnic identity of spouses. Such knowledge will help you choose ways to boost supporters' involvement.


<sup>1</sup> Alison Ledgerwood & Ido Liviatan, “The Price of a Shared Vision: Group Identity Goals and the Social Creation of Value,” *Social Cognition*, 28, No. 3, pp. 401-421; Cameron Anderson & Gavin J. Kildoff, “The Pursuit of Status in Social Groups,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 18, No. 5, pp. 295-298.



## “Consider psychological research into giving.”

- **Encourage your board and staff members to attend other local events.** Observe the social networking that strengthens people's support.
- **Give people tangible symbols of the status they're seeking.** These needn't be expensive, as this excerpt from Jonathan Franzen's novel attests: "I used to work at the Conservancy, and when we'd have our annual gala, the rich people were happy to buy a table for twenty thousand dollars, but only if they got their gift bag at the end of the night. The gift bags were full of worthless garbage donated by someone else. But if they didn't get their gift bags, they wouldn't donate twenty thousand again the next year."<sup>2</sup>
- **Be sure your event facilitates networking and social-circle expansion.** Give people chances to mingle. Provide them with name tags that display their names, titles, and affiliations clearly. Include ice-breaking activities to make it easier for people to get to know each other and exchange information.

No matter what the economy, people look forward to gathering socially at events that serve a worthy cause. A special event can be a vital part of your strategic plan. To make it successful, all you need to do is change your frame of reference.

Incorporating people's need for social status into planning your event isn't a change in direction but a way to penetrate more deeply into an existing donor base. Doing so will help you turn once-a-year event-goers into long-term major donors and build relationships that will last a lifetime. 

---

*William Smialek (William\_Smialek@yahoo.com) is a professor and administrator at Jarvis Christian College in Hawkins, Texas, where he has served in several administrative roles, including vice president for institutional advancement and development. He is a Certified Fund Raising Executive and active in the Association of Fundraising Professionals, East Texas Chapter. He earned an undergraduate degree at the University of Rhode Island and Ph.D. at the University of North Texas.*

## “A conceptual shift can make all the difference.”

### CREATIVE FUNDRAISING IDEAS

#### Break a Record

Consider having your volunteers set a world record on Guinness World Record Day, which comes around every November (for details, go to [www.guinnessworldrecords.com](http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com)). You can try to set a mass-participation record or have volunteers simultaneously try for the same record.

For instance, more than 300,000 volunteers set the world record for most people simultaneously reading aloud. Over 1,500 volunteers set the record for most people wearing Groucho Marx glasses at the same time and place.

You can try for a record no one has even thought of before (Guinness World Records approves thousands of brand-new records each year.) Raise funds by having volunteers ask their friends and family to sponsor them in the event.

#### Be Pet Smart

Team up with an animal-assistance group, hold a pet-themed event, and split the proceeds. For example, Frankfort, Kentucky's Critterpalooza features a pet parade, silent auction, and dog obedience demonstrations. Bark in the Park in Belleville, Illinois, entertains crowds with a dog-owner look-alike contest, while a fundraiser in Greenville, South Carolina, includes displays of dog agility (don't call them stupid pet tricks) and brings in over \$30,000 through donations and entry fees.

#### Put on a Stylish Show

At California's Mira Loma High, students spend the year creating and sewing purses, which they model at the annual Lulu Fashion Show. In Newport, Massachusetts, high school students saunter down the runway in new and vintage clothes that businesses have donated. In both cases, the items are auctioned off at the end of the evening. You can create similar fashion shows with clothes or fashion accessories created by local artists. For more creative fundraising ideas, see *FUNdraising* (Corwin Press, [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com)).

## BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

Uncover motives, cement relationships, and sculpt successful events with these *Nonprofit World* articles ([NonprofitWorld.org/members](http://NonprofitWorld.org/members)):

**Relationship Marketing: Guaranteeing the Future** Vol. 14, No. 5

**How a Special Event Can Raise Your Visibility** (Vol. 13, No. 6)

**Helping Donors Choose Your Organization: Using Image Theory to Change People's Minds** (Vol. 28, No. 2)

**Taming the Beast: Four Keys to that Special Event** (Vol. 20, No. 4)

**Deeper Donor Relationships = Increased Contributions** (Vol. 26, No. 4)

Also see Learning Institute programs on-line: Resource Development and O for Opportunity: Exploring New Revenue Opportunities for Nonprofits ([NonprofitWorld.org/LearningInstitute](http://NonprofitWorld.org/LearningInstitute)).

<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Franzen, *Freedom: A Novel*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, [us.macmillan.com/fsg.aspx](http://us.macmillan.com/fsg.aspx), p. 215.



## Barriers to Strategic Planning and How to Transcend Them

A new study uncovers ways to surmount strategic planning's major roadblocks.

*By Lisa Dahmus & Lynn Perry Wooten*

**R**esearch shows that organizations that use strategic planning outperform others. Why, then, don't all organizations use this valuable tool? To answer this question, we studied the board of one small nonprofit organization. The results point to a new planning model for nonprofit boards.

## First Things First: What Is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning is a governance activity entrusted to nonprofit boards. A strategic plan is a set of goals and tactics designed to help an organization perform its mission and ultimately achieve its vision. A key focus of such a plan is how to balance conflicting priorities and allocate resources most effectively. The analysis underlying the process is as important as the plan itself, because it provides a lens through which to evaluate future decisions.

## Who & What We Studied

The focus of this study was a nonprofit private school in a small southern town.<sup>1</sup> We observed this organization's board before and during a strategic planning process.<sup>2</sup>

Board members were interviewed individually to uncover their beliefs and attitudes about strategic planning. They were also observed during strategic planning meetings. The authors then identified common themes associated with board members' views of strategic planning.

## The Strategic Planning Process

The board members knew they needed to draft and implement a strategic plan and were urged to do so by an outside agency to which the organization was accountable. Because the board was unsure how

to proceed, several members asked the primary author to help them. She did so, guiding the board through the following steps:

- Interviews and written surveys were used to determine the organization's strengths and weaknesses, key environmental factors, and major issues the organization faced.
- A draft strategic plan was developed. It included seven goals and associated strategies, an analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, and a rundown of the competitive environment.

<sup>1</sup>This nonprofit school has approximately 150 students and offers preschool through middle school classes. It has an annual budget of \$650,000 and 15 full-time and seven part-time employees. Its mission is to ensure a superior education for students. The school must compete with private, public, and charter schools for students and funds. It also must attract and retain talented teachers even though it can't offer compensation on par with the public school system.

This article's primary author observed the school's board six months before beginning strategic planning and continuing through the early implementation stages. She had a prior relationship with the organization and provided consulting services before and during the strategic planning process.

- The board met to discuss, modify, and accept the goals.
- In a series of meetings, the board developed action plans for the goals. One board member volunteered to be the strategic plan coordinator. His job was to support people through the implementation phase, reminding them of action items and deadlines.

## Problems Along the Way

Through observing and interviewing the board members, it became clear that they weren't comfortable with strategic planning. It's unlikely they would have completed the process effectively without the author's guidance. Here are some of the problems that arose:

### BEFORE DEVELOPING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- Although board members recognized strategic planning as a board function, they didn't seem to view it as critical to mission achievement. They had discussed updating a strategic plan that was developed seven years ago but kept postponing it because they were uncertain how to proceed. Only when the organization's accrediting agency strongly urged them to develop a strategic plan did they begin to take the activity seriously.
- Some board members said they didn't have the expertise to complete a strategic plan.
- A few members believed that boards typically hire consultants or staff members with expertise in strategic planning. They said they couldn't create a strategic plan because the organization lacked funds to hire such a person.
- Several board members said they would rather work on specific tasks than formulate goals.
- Those board members who felt most comfortable acting as leaders and thinking strategically were already overextended and less involved in board activities than others.

### DURING STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Discussions with board members made it clear that they didn't understand how to begin the process.
- During the strategic planning meeting, it was obvious that few board members had reviewed the draft strategic plan, which made the discussion less than effective. Many members remained silent, and it was difficult to keep the conversation focused on strategic issues. The first meeting lasted about two hours, and little was accomplished.
  - A second meeting was more effective because board members seemed to have a better understanding of the process. At the close of this meeting, they were finally starting to understand how to connect their ideas to actions designed to further their mission and vision. They voiced strong commitment to developing action plans and implementing specific tasks.

A month later, some work had been done toward completing the plan. But the board was still not quite sure how to follow through.

“Research shows that organizations that use strategic planning outperform others.”

<sup>2</sup>The research project was exploratory and qualitative so as to develop a framework to be tested in a larger sample. A case study method was used to give researchers a holistic overview of the research's context, capture data on stakeholders' perceptions, and help researchers understand the strategic planning process by elaborating on theories as they unfolded in the data. Strategic planning was viewed as two distinct phases, development and implementation, since it's likely that different factors promote the effectiveness of each phase.

## What Factors Hindered Effective Planning?

This study suggests a number of obstacles to strategic planning:

- Board members were more comfortable dealing with operational than strategic issues.
- The board lacked the expertise necessary to develop a strategic plan. Although the board included a number of professionals, they had never been involved in a formal strategic planning process.
- This particular board had a high percentage of “followers.”
- The board lacked meeting management practices to facilitate implementation of the plan.

## What Factors Encouraged the Board to Plan?


Several things encouraged this board to complete the strategic planning process:

- A requirement by the nonprofit’s accrediting agency prompted the board to consider the need for a plan.
- Having the author available as a facilitator was a key reason the board initiated and completed the strategic plan.
- Assigning one board member to coordinate the plan’s implementation seemed necessary to facilitate the final phase.
- Written commitments in the form of an action item list encouraged members to follow through.

## A New Planning Model for Nonprofit Boards

This study clarified four keys to making sure that your board completes a successful strategic planning process:

- 1. Be sure every board member is committed to the organization’s success.** Without such commitment, it’s unlikely that board members will undertake the difficult task of planning for the organization’s future. However, even dedicated board members often fail to follow through on a strategic plan. The next three keys are necessary to convert commitment to action.
- 2. Tell board members that strategic planning is part of their job.** Let prospective board members know they’ll be expected to help create a strategic plan. Make this expectation part of a written job description provided to board recruits. To be sure they know what’s expected of them, have them sign a commitment form before joining the board.
- 3. Make certain that board members collectively possess the knowledge necessary for strategic planning.** If people don’t have this expertise when they join the board, provide training for them. Create a board orientation and training kit that includes information on effective meetings, a nonprofit board’s responsibilities, and the differences between governing and managing. Provide a library of books and articles on board governance, and encourage board members to attend workshops and distance-learning courses.
- 4. Put processes in place to assure that board members fully implement the plan.** Follow these steps:
  - Create a list of action items. Assign each board member a specific task and deadline for completion.

- Have board members sign letters of agreement to make certain they understand exactly what their tasks are.
- Choose a board member to remind people of their assignments and encourage them to follow through.
- Make the board’s commitments public. Inform key stakeholders of the goals, strategies, tactics, and timeline for the plan’s implementation.
- If the organization is part of an umbrella association, that larger group can oversee the planning process. It was this type of umbrella organization that prompted the board in this study to complete strategic planning.
- Every year, devote several board meetings to revisiting the strategic plan.
- Hold every board member accountable for implementing the plan’s goals. 

### Selected References

Holland, Thomas P., “Board Accountability Lessons from the Field,” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 12(4).

Miller, Judith L., “The Board As a Monitor of Organizational Activity: The Applicability of Agency Theory to Nonprofit Boards,” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 12(4).

Mulhare, Eileen M., “Mindful of the Future: Strategic Planning Ideology and the Culture of Nonprofit Management,” *Human Organization*, 58.

---

*Lisa Dahmus (ldahmus@umich.edu) is a consultant specializing in board development and strategic planning. She recently received her MBA from the University of Michigan and is involved in various projects at the McCombs School of Business, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas 78712. Lynn Perry Wooten (lpwooten@umich.edu) is a professor at the University of Michigan Business School, 701 Tappan Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48109-1234.*

## YOUR BOARD EDUCATION KIT

Start building a library of information for your board with these *Nonprofit World* resources, available at [NonprofitWorld.org/members](http://NonprofitWorld.org/members):

**Keys to Keep Your Board on Track** (Vol. 16, No. 6)

**Planning: What Every Board Member Should Know** (Vol. 11, No. 3)

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

**Don’t Give Up on Strategic Planning: 10 Keys to Success** (Vol. 22, No. 3)

**Needed: A Better Grasp of Strategic Planning** (Vol. 24, No. 5)

**Seven Creative Ways to Energize Your Board** (Vol. 16, No. 3)

**Make Your Meetings Productive** (Vol. 25, No. 1)

**Strategic Planning & Board Governance Learning Institute** programs online at [NonprofitWorld.org/LearningInstitute](http://NonprofitWorld.org/LearningInstitute).

# Save 20%\* on Our Most Popular Nonprofit Books!

Use discount code NPRFBNDL when you order.

## Guidebook for Directors of Nonprofit Corporations, Third Edition

By Nonprofit Organizations Committee  
2012, Paperback, 380 pages, 7x10



Identify the information you need on areas such as advisory boards, taxation, volunteers, fund-raising, and director liability risks. Written by leading nonprofit legal experts, this guidebook offers practical suggestions and checklists to help directors understand the general legal principles as they apply to the smallest local corporation to the largest nonprofit organization.

PC 5070656  
Regular Price: \$69.95 **\$55.95**  
Member Price: \$49.95 **\$39.95**

## Nonprofit Governance and Management, Third Edition

Edited by Cheryl Sorokin, Judith A. Cion, Jeannie Carmedelle Frey, and Richard L. Sevcik  
2011, Paperback, 250 pages, 7x10



Gain an overview of governance basics and board structure and operations, as well as specific guidance on such key substantive issues as strategic planning, financial management, fund-raising, oversight of the executive officer, human resources, risk management, and handling of crises.

PC 5070647  
Regular Price: \$109.95 **\$87.95**  
Member Price: \$89.95 **\$71.95**

## Guide to Representing Religious Organizations



Edited by Jeannie Carmedelle Frey, Lisa A. Runquist, and Patricia A. Tauchert

2009, Paperback, 321 pages, 7x10

PC 5070530  
Regular Price: \$89.95 **\$71.95**  
Member Price: \$69.95 **\$55.95**

## Nonprofit Resources, Second Edition



Edited by Victor Futter and Lisa A. Runquist

2007, Paperback, 149 pages, 6x9

PC 5070527  
Regular Price: \$19.95 **\$15.95**  
Member Price: \$17.95 **\$14.35**

## Model Nonprofit Corporation Act, Third Edition



By Nonprofit Organizations Committee

2009, Paperback, 700 pages, 6x9

PC 5070600  
Regular Price: \$199.95 **\$159.95**  
Member Price: \$169.95 **\$135.95**

## The ABCs of Nonprofits



By Lisa A. Runquist  
2005, Paperback, 122 pages, 7x10

PC 5070491  
Regular Price: \$24.95 **\$19.95**  
Member Price: \$22.95 **\$18.35**



## Buy all six together for an additional savings!

### Nonprofit Library

PC 5070392P  
Regular Price: \$411.75 **\$329.40**  
Member Price: \$336.55 **\$269.24**

## 2 Easy Ways to Order:

1

Visit [ShopABA.org](http://ShopABA.org) and use discount code NPRFBNDL

2

Call ABA Customer Service at (800) 285-2221

\* Save an additional 20% off the regular or member price when you use discount code NPRFBNDL when processing your order. The discount only applies to the print books featured in this ad and does not apply to eBooks, or other ABA products not featured here. Discount expires on March 31, 2013, and cannot be combined with any other discounts or offers. Tax and shipping/handling charges may apply.

# What You Need to Know about Sexual Harassment

Understanding sexual harassment is crucial to assure a productive workplace and avoid lawsuits.

By Kendrick Kleiner

**M**any organizational leaders think sexual harassment is mostly a thing of the past. But, despite laws against it and education about it, sexual harassment hasn't decreased as much as we'd like to think. It still causes immense suffering and dramatic drops in workplace productivity.

## Why You Can't Let Up on Preventive Measures

Sexual harassment is a serious crime and among the worst torments an employee can undergo. Feelings of anger, embarrassment, and fear cause victims to leave their jobs or perform their work poorly. The loss of morale can spread throughout the office and hurt the entire organization. Every year, lawsuits are filed against organizations by employees who feel their claims weren't investigated properly or the perpetrators punished appropriately.<sup>1</sup>

There are two distinct types of sexual harassment:

**1. Quid pro quo harassment** is also known as the "tangible job benefit" type of harassment. This type of harassment directly affects the victimized employee's career path. For example:

- An employee feels obligated to submit to a supervisor's request for sexual favors as a condition of continued employment.
- A supervisor grants job benefits, such as a raise or a promotion, in exchange for sexual favors.
- A supervisor withholds job benefits or assigns more work to an employee who has rejected a request for sexual favors.

**2. Hostile work environment harassment** is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that is severe or pervasive. Some examples include:

- unwelcome sexual advances, such as leering or touching
- requests for sexual favors
- sexual remarks, jokes, or gestures.

The behavior needn't be deliberate or meant in a negative way. A calendar in your office with photos of half naked people could be considered harassment. So could giving your assistant a friendly massage.

People often forget that women aren't the only victims of sexual harassment. The number of women sexually harassing men has been steadily growing every year. In addition to females harassing male employees, sexual harassment can come from employees of the same sex.

## Why Victims Don't Always Report Harassment

People are less likely to perceive sexual attention as harassment if any of the following conditions exist:

- The offenses are infrequent.
- No obvious negative effects result.
- The perpetrator's status is the same as or lower than the victim's.
- The victim is a man.
- The victim is young.

“The number of women sexually harassing men has been growing.”

Under any of those circumstances, many people don't report the incidents. Indeed, they often don't even realize they're being harassed. Table 1 lists other reasons

sexual harassment goes unreported, as shown in a recent study.<sup>2</sup>

When people are sexually harassed but make no formal complaint, they tend to become dysfunctional. Another study<sup>3</sup> reveals ways employees reacted when they were sexually harassed at work:

REASONS TARGETS ARE RELUCTANT TO REPORT	PERCENTAGE
Did not think it was serious enough	50
Other actions seemed to resolve situation	40
It would make work situation unpleasant	29
Did not think anything would be done	20
Thought this would not be kept confidential	19
Did not want to hurt the harasser	17
Thought it would affect my career	17
Too embarrassed	11
Thought I would be blamed	9
Did not think I would be believed	8
Supervisors were not supportive	6
Did not know what actions to take or how to take them	5
Would take too much time or effort	5
Other	4

<sup>1</sup>“Handling Sexual Harassment in the Workplace,” *The CPA Journal*, www.nysscpa.org/cpajournal/old/12106205.html.

<sup>2</sup> Benier, Theresa M., *Gender Myths v. Working Realities*, New York University Press (www.nyupress.org), p. 163.


<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.



- 8% used sick leave to avoid the workplace.
- 8% used annual leave to avoid the workplace.
- 1% took leave without pay.
- 3% sought medical or emotional help.
- 2% were reassigned or fired.
- 2% were transferred to a new job.
- 21% reported a decline in productivity.
- 0.01% quit without a new job.

“Make it clear that all facts will be kept confidential.”

**Enforce your sexual harassment policy.** One way to be sure your policy is enforced is to hold periodic meetings with employees, going over the policy with them. Have employees sign papers stating that they’ve thoroughly read the policy and fully understand the consequences of sexual harassment. Everyone needs to be aware that sexual harassment is disrespectful, hurtful, and illegal.

**Continually encourage people** to report any incidents of sexual harassment. Only when people make such reports can the causes be found, future problems prevented, and the situation improved for everyone’s benefit. 

## What Steps to Take

**Create a written sexual harassment policy.** In your policy, describe what sexual harassment is (including examples), and state that it is unacceptable. Detail the procedure for reporting and investigating complaints. Make it clear that all facts will be kept confidential. Highlight the fact that sexual harassment is against the law and will be strictly punished.

**Screen potential employees** before hiring to make sure they don’t have a history of sexually harassing others.

**Orient new employees** by going over your employee handbook, calling attention to your harassment policy, and stressing the importance of a harassment-free workplace.

**Foster a secure environment.** Employees need to feel comfortable reporting sexual harassment allegations, knowing that they’ll be supported, taken seriously, and treated with care and sensitivity.

**Investigate all complaints of harassment** quickly and thoroughly. Once a conclusion is reached, take corrective action. This action could be termination of the accused employee. Whatever the punishment, it should be severe enough to demonstrate that sexual harassment won’t be tolerated.

## OTHER RESOURCES

\*Conroy, Charles, “Sexual Harassment: Don’t Let It Destroy Your Organization,” *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 10, No. 2.

\*Myers, John, “Do You Think Sex When You Hear Harassment?,” *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 24, No. 4.

“New Light Shed on Sexual Harassment in the Workforce,” University of Missouri – Columbia, [mentalhealth.about.com/library/sci/0202/blharass0202.htm](http://mentalhealth.about.com/library/sci/0202/blharass0202.htm).

“Sexual Harassment,” U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, [www.eeoc.gov/types/sexual\\_harassment.html](http://www.eeoc.gov/types/sexual_harassment.html).

\*Quak, Sze Min & Brian Kleiner, “The Need for Anti-Bias Policies,” *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 22, No. 5.

\*Starred resources are available at [www.NonprofitWorld.org/members](http://www.NonprofitWorld.org/members).

*Kendrick Kleiner is a researchers and consultant who specializes in human resource management in nonprofit organizations. You may contact the author at 551 Santa Barbara Avenue, Fullerton, California 92834.*

# What to Do Before a Long-Term Leader Departs

*By Priscilla Rosenwald*

**Your organization's future depends on planning for leadership transition.**

**N**onprofit leaders will be leaving their organizations at a staggering rate in the next few years. Many are long-time leaders or founders. Succeeding such a leader can be especially challenging for the new chief executive. The organization's sustainability depends on how the board, departing leader, and staff manage the transition. Let's look at how two organizations handled this challenge.

**“Nonprofit leaders will be leaving their organizations at a staggering rate.”**



“Succeeding a founder or long-time leader is especially challenging.”

## Organization A: Founders Look to the Future

Organization A, a nonprofit research organization, was founded in the early 1990s by two women who had been consultants in the field. As founding directors, they shared all aspects of leadership and were directly involved in delivering the work. Like most founders, they set strategic direction and, for all intents and purposes, directed and led the board. Over time, they built a team but, like many founders, struggled with delegation.

The co-directors had been in their roles for two decades when they began to think about career transition for themselves. One director wanted to leave the organization to pursue a range of activities while continuing to work on occasional research projects. The goal of the other co-director was to stay in the organization and take a senior-level research role.

These leaders knew they needed a transition plan to ensure their legacy and the organization's future. They began by strengthening the board and preparing board members for leadership and governance. Over time, the board stepped into a more active governance role, although the founding leaders continued to create the agenda and lead board meetings.

The board formed a transition committee and began looking for a new leader, expecting their search to go smoothly. But, to their surprise, they weren't able to find the right successor. After a frustrating, disappointing search, they hired a consulting firm to help them. The consultants quickly figured out why the search wasn't going well. There were two major problems:

- Candidates were worried about following in the footsteps of such long-term leaders. They were even more concerned about coming into an organization that retained one of the founders in a leadership position. The transition committee hadn't even considered this problem and, thus, hadn't addressed it with candidates. The consultants helped the committee confront this issue so that they could discuss it openly in interviews with candidates and mitigate candidates' fears.
- The organization's leaders knew the organization needed to change in order to grow. But they hadn't articulated the kind of leader needed to effect this change. The consultants worked closely with the board and staff to identify the key competencies required in their new leader. The consulting team also set up change management workshops for board and staff members. These workshops clarified the change process and gave everyone a chance to talk about the anxieties that are natural during a major transition.

Ultimately, a candidate with extensive leadership experience was hired. He facilitated a number of changes that strengthened the organization, increased revenues, expanded staff, and provided entree into new areas.

## Organization B: The Founder Leaves No Legacy

Organization B, a large nonprofit that develops training programs, is a vivid example of what happens when leaders don't plan for succession. Its founder had led the organization for over three decades. He had personally selected all members of the senior leadership team. No one served as a "number two" or deputy to the founder.

When the high-profile founder decided to step down, he formed an internal search committee. This committee was made up entirely of board members; there was no staff input or representation, and the exiting leader insisted on helping to select his successor. Minimal stakeholder input was sought, and the search was conducted without the guidance of a search professional.

Crisis set in when the board selected a candidate without the exiting leader's approval. After trying unsuccessfully to block the hire, the leader refused to participate in events planned to honor his tenure and welcome the new leader. Moreover, he openly disparaged the new leader within their professional networks.

After the founder left, a multitude of problems surrounding finances, funding, and staff competencies surfaced. Board succession hadn't been planned, and the end of the current board chair's term coincided with the departure of the founder. This meant that the new chief executive and new board chair were forced to navigate the rocky waters together.


In desperation, the organization hired a consulting firm. The consultants collaborated with the board to develop a transition strategy. They also provided coaching to help everyone through the transition.

Six months have passed since the founder left. The major legal and financial issues have been addressed and are approaching resolution. The board is strengthening the role of its executive committee. The new chief executive has incorporated a fresh vision for a changing organization. He has kept the organization from failing. But it is far too late for anyone to rescue the legacy of the original founder.

## Lessons Learned

The experiences of Organizations A and B offer critical lessons. Here are the keys:

- Be sure the board is fully informed about financial and operational matters. Have a clear board succession plan in place.
- Obtain feedback from stakeholders when assessing the chief executive.

- Create a transition committee that is led by the board and includes staff input.
- Develop a succession strategy for the chief executive. Tie it to your strategic plan. Address succession issues frankly and honestly.
- Clearly define the role of the departing leader during and following the transition. It is ill-advised for the former leader to serve on the board. If the ex-leader plans to continue with the organization in any way, draw up a contract making it clear that it won't be in a decision-making role.
- Consider retaining consultants to help manage the more challenging aspects of transition.
- Provide coaching for the leadership team and new executive throughout the transition process.
- Initiate your succession strategy *before* the planned departure of your chief executive. 

---

*Priscilla Rosenwald (prose@leadrecruit.com) is founder and principal of Leadership Recruiters, an executive search firm specializing in recruitment and development of executive talent for nonprofit organizations (www.leadrecruit.com).*

## PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Put the insights in this article into action with these *Nonprofit World* articles (NonprofitWorld.org/members):

**Planning to Succeed: Creating a Succession Plan** (Vol. 29, No. 3)

**Leading and Managing Governance Change** (Vol. 26, No. 3)

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

**Don't Be Caught with an Empty Bench** (Vol. 28, No. 1)

**Should You Insure Your CEO?** (Vol. 30, No. 4)

**Before You Hire an Executive Search Consultant** (Vol. 13, No. 6)

**The Founding Parent Syndrome** (Vol. 10, No. 5)

**How to Prepare Board Members to Govern Effectively** (Vol. 25, No. 6)

**The Key to Building Productive Teams** (Vol. 21, No. 4)

**In Search of the White Knight: Finding the Perfect Consultant** (Vol. 17, No. 6)

**Hiring an Interim Executive Director** (Vol. 29, No. 5)

## Warning Signs

Founder's syndrome can occur whenever a leader is in place for a long time and begins to accrue disproportionate power. Indications of the resulting organizational dysfunction include:

- The organization is overly identified with the leader.
- No succession plan exists.
- The leader is at the center of all decision-making.
- The organization becomes reactive, rather than proactive, and there is little input from staff or board into decisions.
- Staff are valued for their loyalty rather than their ideas, ensuring that the leader is surrounded by cheerleaders rather than challengers.
- There is limited professional development of the staff, which re-enforces and solidifies the leader's influence.
- The board's role is to "support" the leader rather than lead the organization. The board doesn't probe financial or programmatic questions.
- When the leader decides to depart, the mad scramble to address succession is often done with a sense of panic and urgency. As staff haven't been developed professionally, there is no chance for an internal succession. Ideally, the board would create an interim leadership plan, allowing time to identify organizational and leadership challenges with a focus on the future. But this is often not the model embraced by founder-led boards as they rush to fill the leadership vacuum.

If your organization shows any of these signs, it's time to take steps to reverse the dysfunction. You may need to bring in an outside facilitator to smooth the process of change and ensure your organization's future.



## WHAT'S UP ONLINE?

To broaden online discussions on nonprofit topics, we're expanding our Discussion Forum with a ListServe, provided by Yahoo Groups. To join, you can either click on the "Yahoo" button at:

<http://www.NonprofitWorld.org/social/>  
(free Yahoo login required)

or send a blank e-mail to:

[NonprofitWorld-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:NonprofitWorld-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

If you have any questions, contact Jason Chmura at [jchmura@NonprofitWorld.org](mailto:jchmura@NonprofitWorld.org).

subscription<sup>x</sup>press



Because  
*subscriptions*  
shouldn't be  
complicated.

## Solutions for Nonprofit Publishers

- SaaS subscription management solution
- Low cost of ownership
- Single item and bundled products
- Campaign tracking
- Managed infrastructure incl. database backups
- PCI Certified data centered & solution
- Digital, print & metered subscription models

Contact us for information or a free demonstration!

800.769.7638

[www.THINKSubscription.com](http://www.THINKSubscription.com)



NATIONAL CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE  
888.TRY.NCDC | [www.ncdc.org](http://www.ncdc.org)



September 22-26, 2012

**the VOICE**  
for Catholic Fundraising  
NASHVILLE | 2012

*Join the nation's largest association of religious fundraisers for the 44th Annual NCDC Conference and Exposition in Nashville, TN!*

- Outstanding high-quality networking opportunities with Catholic fundraisers from around the nation
- Fifty unique educational breakout sessions from expert fundraisers in ten fundraising tracks, including schools and parishes
- Dynamic general sessions and inspiring featured speakers
- Special master sessions for advanced fundraisers and fundamentals sessions for beginners
- Extensive exhibit hall with seasoned exhibitors that understand Catholic fundraising
- Catholic perspective reinforcing the ministry of fundraising
- Daily Eucharistic celebrations and prayer room
- Exciting special events to share with your peers
- And so much more!

The NCDC Conference and Exposition is the best place for Catholic Fundraisers to get the most for their time and money!

Join us and become an integral part of NCDC: The Voice for Catholic Fundraising! Bring a friend, too!

Register now online at [www.ncdc.org/conference!](http://www.ncdc.org/conference!)



September 22 - 26, 2012 | Gaylord Opryland Resort | Nashville, TN

# Change or Perish: the Future Is Guaranteed to No One

By Stephen Long

You need a whole new way of thinking to keep ahead of changes and increased competition.

**When you're through changing, you're through.** —Bruce Barton

**A**hh, consultants! — purveyors of ideas, concepts, and theoretical models. As I'm considered a member of this distinguished fraternity, I realize that at times we consultants create more problems than solutions. Take change, for example. Most clients want projects completed quickly at the lowest cost possible. Many consultants bow to this pressure by suggesting a massive re-engineering solution. *Just shuffle the organizational chart a little, apply a global matrix, adjust the IT system, and — voila! — you've got change!*

Well, not really. Simply rewriting job descriptions relies on simplistic solutions to complex problems. Revising formal roles is only a small part of transition and transformation. Lasting change occurs by altering the collective belief system through informal networks. It takes a skilled leader with an arsenal of tools to bring about true change.

Re-engineering creates the illusion of change, but often isn't handled correctly and produces anxiety and confusion. Typically, re-engineering fails to deal with the most important part of change — the human component.

In the past, change happened incrementally. Now, change occurs exponentially. Information replaces itself every 8-15 years. Entire industries will disappear and be replaced by others that we haven't even heard of yet. How many people had heard of the Internet in 1990? Whoever heard of "social media" 10 years ago?

Reactive managers will play catch-up at best. Proactive executives who master the skills of human nature will hold the power to lead successful change. It's not the car — it's the driver. It's not the system — it's the quarterback. Attach any sport analogy you want, the fact is someone has to make sure something gets done or you'll be just another fatality in the new economy. Up to 80% of all transformation efforts fail due to shortcuts in time and money — costing more time and money down the road, exposing the organization to greater risk than originally confronted.

## Decide Why, When, & How to Make Changes

To keep up, you must enact moderate change at least once a year and major change every four to five years. You may need to make

changes to accomplish one or more of the following:

- Gain greater access to resources.
- Transform the organization's culture.
- Build strong teams.
- Plan for succession.
- Execute a new strategy.

While there's no single blueprint for change, you must address four fundamental questions:

1. What should you change? What needs to be different?
2. What should you change to? What's the ideal result?
3. How should you cause the change? Which change strategy (or strategies) should you use?
4. While creating the change, are you building resistance or enthusiasm? Change occurs more effectively when people are excited about it

“You must enact major change every four to five years.”

## Create a Foundation for Change

Unless it's built on a firm foundation, any plan for change will fail. Effective leaders accomplish several objectives *before* they lead change:

- 1. Set the agenda.** Establish what needs to be done, who has to do it, and when it will be accomplished.
- 2. Build internal and external networks** of committed people to accomplish the agenda.
- 3. Provide strategies for success.** Identify what can be done within the limits of available resources.
- 4. Recognize the hard side of change.** The cost of change is related to two primary factors:
  - Duration — how long it will take to accomplish the change — will set the boundaries of your budget.
  - Competency — how effectively the change is implemented — is determined by the networks you build.

## Don't Make These Mistakes when Change Is Needed

The biggest mistake executives make when initiating change is trying to do so without first establishing trust. They fail to earn trust in four ways:

**1. They don't adequately explain** why change is needed and how it will benefit everyone involved.

**2. They don't show the reality of the situation** over a long period. Executives who constantly cry "the sky is falling" are viewed as alarmists, and those who minimize the severity of challenges fail to energize people.

**3. They look for the "perfect" strategy** rather than developing a sound, appropriate plan and then taking action.

**4. They don't help their employees develop change skills.** Workers instinctively know that they require new skills to execute change and that robust, relevant training is imperative. They're frustrated when faced with challenges without the skills to meet them.

Another mistake is to underestimate the amount of communication needed during change. The total amount of communication received by the average employee is 2,300,000 impressions in three months. The number relating to a change initiative over three months is a mere 13,400 — less than 1% of the entire communication market share!

That's far less than what's necessary to overcome people's resistance to change. If you want a change initiative to be successful, be sure that messages about the change make up at least 20% of the communication each employee receives.

You can use e-mail, articles, speeches, and social media such as Twitter to discuss the change. But be aware that the most important communication of all isn't what you tell employees but what they say to one another. Identify the "early adapters" — members of your staff who are quickest to accept change. Pay special attention to them and the messages you give them. Nurturing your relationship with them is the best way to create organization-wide buy-in. What they say to others will have more impact than anything else you can do to promote change.

Be sure you don't ignore people's resistance to change. Understand that it's a natural human response. Resistance originates under two scenarios. First, if the change presents a *threat* to employees' primary needs, such as security and safety, they'll clutch on to old ways of doing things, no matter how persuasive the information is to change. Second, if employees are satisfied with the current situation, they'll resist change. *Satisfaction* creates stagnation. Change occurs only when people are dissatisfied with their current condition. Executives who spell out why employees should feel dissatisfied and create a vision of a better future are more likely to experience successful change.


## Select a Change Strategy

Change initiatives based on flawed strategies have predictably flawed outcomes. The key to choosing a strategy is to determine the speed with which you'll accomplish the change. To do so, answer the six questions in Table 1.

Your answers to these questions will make it clear how quickly to make the change. If you want rapid change, you'll need the following conditions: low resistance, high trust, persuasive reasons, low stakes, few people involved, and a clear plan of action. The more that conditions vary from this ideal, the greater the likelihood that the change effort will bog down or fail. You must be willing to lengthen the time spent communicating about the change if conditions warrant.

The goal of your communication is to change people's behavior.

TABLE 1		
QUESTION	FASTER SPEED	SLOWER SPEED
1. How much resistance is anticipated?	Little	Much
2. To what degree does the workforce trust the executives leading the change?	A Lot	A Little
3. How valid is the information suggesting that change is needed?	Persuasive	Not Credible
4. What are the stakes involved?	Low	High
5. How many people are involved in the change?	Just a Few	Many
6. How clear is the plan of action?	Very clear	Not clearly defined

Behavior-changing techniques range along a continuum of employee empowerment. At one end are methods of coercion, manipulation, and negotiation. Using these approaches, change will occur faster, but it will be unstable and may not last. At the other end are education and facilitation. While these techniques take longer, they provide greater empowerment, which leads to more stable, enduring change. 

*Dr. Stephen Long (DocLong@LevelSixLeadership.com) is the president of the Institute for Level Six Leadership (www.LevelSixLeadership.com), a management consulting firm specializing in leveraging human capital, and author of GOLD! Applying Level Six Performance to Capture the Runaway American Dream (Amazon E-Books, www.amazon.com/Applying-Performance-Capture-American-ebook/dp/B002WB0YME/ref=sr\_1\_2?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1267977127&sr=1-2).*

## WHICH CHANGE STRATEGY IS BEST FOR YOU?

For more details on selecting a change strategy and implementing it, see these *Nonprofit World* articles at NonprofitWorld.org/members:

**Match Your Change Strategy to Your Organization's Maturity** (Vol. 21, No. 5)

**When It's Time for a Turnaround** (Vol. 26, No. 2)

**The Promise and Pitfalls of Organizational Change** (Vol. 28, No. 4)

**How to Improve the Process of Change: The Sanctuary Model** (Vol. 28, No. 6)

**Taking Action to Manage Change** (Vol. 29, No. 1)

**Organizational Culture: It's in the Walk, Not Just the Talk** (Vol. 29, No. 6)



# How to Track Employee Benefit Eligibility: Three Solutions to a Tricky Topic

By John Foucault

Although it's a complicated matter, it's one you can't ignore.

**“M**ore with less” has always been the nonprofit motto, but never more so than today, with executives taking on additional responsibilities and working more hours. In this busy environment, one area that can get neglected is tracking employee eligibility for the organization’s retirement plan. After all, there are frequently different rules for different components of the plan — employer contributions, workers’ contributions, and possibly an employer match contribution. Tracking eligibility for these plans can be time-consuming.

The picture gets even more complicated when you consider that workers are increasingly responsible for their own contributions. Under the old benefit plans, employers simply paid out a certain amount of money to retired personnel each month. But more and more organizations are switching over to defined contribution plans, where each staff member decides whether to participate. This makes tracking eligibility and participation even more complex.

But this is an area that can't be ignored. Procedures for the YMCA, for example, require the local Y to contribute to the retirement fund for each employee who has met the hours-worked requirement. If an employee isn't enrolled in the fund in a timely manner, an unfunded liability will be created for that local Y. When the mistake is discovered, the local Y has to make up both employee and employer contributions, which in the worst case can total tens of thousands of dollars plus a penalty.

Even if your organization doesn't have mandatory enrollment, eligibility tracking is a vital process. If you know which employees are close to their maximum retirement plan contributions, you can plan accordingly. And if you can forecast who will become eligible for your plan in, say, the next 90 days, it's a lot easier to manage cash flow so you're not caught off guard.

## Handle Retirement Tracking with Care

There are three major ways to track retirement eligibility:

**1. Outsource** Third-party administrators can handle all or part of your nonprofit's retirement program. Companies like Boston Financial or Aon Hewitt will calculate pension benefits, track employee participation, and provide other related services. If you can afford the fees associated with this option, it's a straightforward way to handle plan administration.

However, outsourcing has some disadvantages. First, you lose some control. It's harder to manage cash flow by keeping track of who will be eligible for your retirement plan in a certain time frame. You can't modify an employee's profile to account for special

circumstances. Setting up an outsourcing program can be difficult, and if you ever decide to cancel, bringing your information back in-house isn't always simple. Finally, these agreements can be costly. For smaller, cash-strapped organizations, this option may simply be too expensive to even consider.

**2. Do It Yourself** You can save money and gain more control over your eligibility tracking by doing the paperwork yourself, setting up a system of Excel spreadsheets and procedures to track hours that fits your needs. The only cost is employee time, and

“A mistake can result in tens of thousands of dollars plus a penalty.”

## IF YOU OUTSOURCE

If you decide to outsource your retirement tracking, here are a few companies that provide such services:

- The Standard, [www3.standard.com](http://www3.standard.com)
- Principal, [www.principal.com](http://www.principal.com)
- Aon Hewitt, [www.aon.com](http://www.aon.com)
- Boston Financial, [www.bostonfinancial.com](http://www.bostonfinancial.com)

your eligibility tracking system needn't be any more complex than you want it to be.

On the other hand, do-it-yourself solutions carry several risks of their own. First, they take time. Comparing multiple reports, looking through years of historical data, and tracking hours toward eligibility on spreadsheets add up to quite a chore.

Second, even when there's someone available to put in the hours, juggling so many variables makes it easy to miss something. This isn't only financially risky; it's bad for employee morale to put such a weighty responsibility into the hands of someone who's already strapped for time. For many nonprofits, do-it-yourself solutions may be more trouble than they're worth.


“Juggling so many variables makes it easy to miss something.”

**3. Use Software** Software programs like Points North's Who's Where can be an ideal compromise. They make tracking retirement eligibility nearly as simple as with a third-party administrator, but offer most of the cost savings and customization of a do-it-yourself system.

These programs are compatible with payroll provider data, and they run eligibility checks every time you process payroll. They provide a list of who's eligible for your plan, who will be eligible, who's enrolled, and who needs to be enrolled. This saves time, since you don't have to compare multiple reports, historical data, or spreadsheets. It also reduces the risk of liability. All eligible employees will be highlighted, so if enrollment is mandatory, you'll know who still needs to get signed up.

For organizations with multiple levels, such software can provide vital summary information. Nonprofits can use it to see which chapters or employers have workers who are eligible but not enrolled. They can also see those who are delinquent in forwarding their contribution payments through the system's electronic money movement feature.

## Be Diligent

Nonprofits can't afford to make mistakes with their cash flow. Retirement eligibility tracking systems are essential for planning purposes, but few nonprofits have them set up. Whether you decide to outsource this work, do it yourself, or purchase specialized software, make sure you're taking this responsibility seriously. 

*John Foucault is president of Points North ([www.points-north.com](http://www.points-north.com)), a nationally-recognized software firm that has partnered with the YMCA Retirement Fund and other nonprofits.*

## The All-in-One – Affordable – Fundraising Solution



Manage Contacts  
& Develop Donors



Handle All Types of  
Fundraising Activities



Track, Process &  
Acknowledge Donations



Collect Donations &  
Information Online



Report and Analyze  
Your Results



Friend-to-Friend  
Fundraising Web Pages

# Donor Perfect.

Fundraising Software



\*Top Rated in N-TEN / Idealware's "A Consumers Guide to Low Cost Donor Management Systems"

**Both Installed & Online Versions Available**

For a FREE trial & to learn more, visit  
[donorperfect.com/NPWorld](http://donorperfect.com/NPWorld)  
or call 800-220-8111

# Writing Well by Doing Less: A Five-Step Plan

By Tijana Salaj

Become the go-to authority  
people turn to every time.

**W**riting about your organization, your segment of the nonprofit sector, or your field of interest is a great way to get the word out to people about the work your organization does. Whether you write a blog, a newsletter, or articles in journals, you need to write quickly and cogently. The key is to be sure you don't confuse being busy with being effective. Use this simple five-step plan of action:

“Don't confuse being busy with being effective.”

## 1. Select the Right Topic

Brainstorm subjects to write about, and list all the ideas that come to mind. Then take a break. Do something unrelated to writing for a while, and get back to your ideas later. You'll find that “amazing” ideas don't always seem so amazing a few hours later. Give yourself a chance to retain or reject your original ideas.

## 2. Research First

Before you start writing, be sure you know your topic. Do research ahead of time so you aren't going back and forth between writing and researching. Remember that research is a way of exploring new ideas. Thus, you may stumble upon something interesting and relevant for your topic. Knowledge of your subject helps your writing flow easily and gives your article depth.

## 3. Set Time Limits

Preparing a schedule will help you save time. Set time limits for each stage of the writing process. Plan how much time you'll write each day, and stick to it.


## 4. Minimize Distractions

Before you begin writing, close every other application on your screen, including e-mail and instant messaging, and turn off your cellphone. Set a timer to go off when it's time to go on to the next task. That way, you won't have to keep checking the time and can focus totally on your writing.

## 5. Edit and Proof – But Only at the End

Don't worry about editing while you're writing. Focus on getting the words down and getting the piece finished. When you're done, print your piece and put it aside for a few hours, then reread it. That's the time to pay attention to spelling, grammar, and language usage. Then print your piece again, put it away for another hour or so, and proofread it. Always proof your work in hard copy, not on the screen.

If you're writing an e-mail, you don't need to be quite so thorough with your editing, but do reread and proof every important e-mail message. And if it's really important, print it out before proofing it.

Once you've made these ideas into structured habits, you'll find yourself with more time to enjoy other aspects of your life and less unnecessary time spent on the writing itself. This in turn will insure that all your writing projects are worth the effort. 

---

*Tijana Salaj (tsalaj@ffzg.hr) is a graduate student at University of Zagreb in Croatia, concentrated on English Linguistics. She has a BA in English and Philosophy from University of J.J.Strossmayer, Croatia, and is interested in publishing, politics, PR and international affairs. She is also an active member of the Red Cross and United Nation Model Conferences.*

IS YOUR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM OUT OF **FOCUS?**

LET THE EXPERTS CLEAR THINGS UP



INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP AND TUITION SERVICES, INC.

FULL-SERVICE ADMINISTRATION OF SCHOLARSHIP & GRANT PROGRAMS

- Web-Based Applications ●
- Application Processing ●
- User Communications ●
- Winner Selection ●
- Funds Disbursement ●

Contact Us Today For A **FREE** Consultation

855-670-ISTS ● [applyISTS.com](http://applyISTS.com)



- Adoption & Foster Care Placement Centers
- Substance Abuse Centers
- Mental Health Counseling Centers
- Residential Care Facilities
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Developmentally Disabled Programs
- Vocational Rehabilitation Facilities

And more!

Have Your Insurance Agent Call

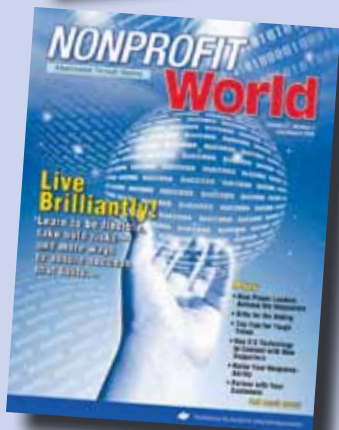
**1.800.275.6472**



Providing Coverage For Social Service Agencies Since 1976.

**INSURANCE**

AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE



## Enjoy Reading **NONPROFIT WORLD ?**

Here are more benefits of membership in the Society for Nonprofit Organizations

- 12 issues of **Nonprofit World Funding Alert**, providing monthly updates on grant and funding opportunities
- **Membership in GrantStation**, with instant access to over 5,500 grantmakers via the Find-a-Funder searchable database
- Complete access to over 700 printer-ready management articles, searchable by author, key word, or subject
- Discounts on products and services, including books, audiotapes, videotapes and Webinars presented by experts in the field
- Reduced enrollment fees from the Learning Institute for the Society's Certificate of Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership and Management
- Free job postings on our NonprofitCareers.org job site

For more information, visit:  
**[www.NonprofitWorld.org](http://www.NonprofitWorld.org)**



# Push the "Clear Button" to Eliminate Stress

By Don Joseph Goewey

Transcending stress will give you the calm, peaceful attitude that's key to success.

**Y**ou might think it ridiculous if someone told you that the one thing you actually control is your level of stress. And yet it's true, and it's a truth that can set you free.

We human beings are capable of generating all sorts of stressful events purely in our heads. These anxious thoughts flood the brain with stress hormones, causing the primitive brain to expand and making you edgy and drained of the savvy you need to transcend problems.

When persistent, these stress hormones become toxic, causing the higher brain to shrink. It's tragic because the higher brain holds the potential to make you great in good times as well as bad. The higher brain makes you a creative problem solver, sustains positive emotions, and helps you forge constructive relationships.

Take heart. All the damage stress has caused your brain is reversible. The approach to recovery couldn't be simpler. Below is a tool to move you in this new direction. It will help you collapse anxious, stress-provoking thoughts before they escalate into a full-blown stress reaction. Here's how it works:

**Step 1. Push the clear button.** Imagine a button at the center of your palm that sends a biofeedback signal to calm the part of the brain that generates stress reactions. Push the button and keep pressing it as you follow through with Step 2.


**Step 2. Count to three.** The primitive brain has the intelligence of a two-year-old, and like a two-year-old, it needs to be distracted. Your grandparents' advice to count to three does the trick. But here's today modernization on grandma's advice:

To further distract your primitive two-year-old from acting out, imagine each number as a color. See 1 as red, 2 as blue, and 3 as green, taking a slow, easy breath with each number you count.

**Step 3. Let go.** On the final breath, let go. Feel your brain relax. Bring your attention to the present moment. Be right here, right now, and smile gently, from the inside. Then go about your business with fearless self-confidence.

“The clear button reactivates higher brain power.”

By following these steps, you've escaped a debilitating stress reaction. Neurologically, you've switched control of your brain from primitive to higher neural networks where creative intelligence kicks in. Thus, you'll begin to see solutions instead of all the problems a brain under

stress tends to exaggerate. The clear button reactivates higher brain power, lifting you to the top of your game. 

---

*Don Joseph Goewey has worked in some of the most stressful places on earth – from cancer wards to refugee camps to corporate offices – helping people transcend stress and fear to reach a higher potential. He co-founded a human performance firm, ProAttitude ([www.proattitude.com](http://www.proattitude.com)), to end stress in the workplace. His book Mystic Cool ([info@mysticcool.com](mailto:info@mysticcool.com), [www.mysticcool.com](http://www.mysticcool.com)) defines a proven approach to sustain peak performance and greater well-being.*



## 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](mailto:muehrcke@charter.net) or [jill@snpo.org](mailto:jill@snpo.org)

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!

Also, we hope you'll join the discussion on the Nonprofit World Discussion Forum. Just go to [www.NonprofitWorld.org](http://www.NonprofitWorld.org), sign in as a member, and click on the Nonprofit Forum link.

## moving? let us know!

Send old AND new address, with mailing label if possible, to:

The Society for Nonprofit Organizations  
P.O. Box 510354  
Livonia, MI 48151

The post office WILL NOT forward copies of **Nonprofit World**. So let us know BEFORE you move so that you won't miss any issues.

## advertisers index

American Bar Association .....	page 11
DonorPerfect .....	page 21
501(c) Agencies Trust.....	Inside Back Cover
Fundraising for a Cause.....	page 5
International Scholarship & Tuition Services.....	page 23
Irwin Siegel.....	Inside Front Cover
National Catholic Development (The Voice).....	page 17
Non-Profit Purchasing Group (NPPG) .....	Back Cover
RPS National Insurance Professionals Corporation .....	page 23
Shoestring Agency.....	page 3
Think Subscription.....	page 17

A special **thank you** to the nonprofit branding experts at SHOESTRING (the nonprofit's agency) for the work they did on our re-branding & new look for *Nonprofit World* magazine.



# Finding Comfort in the Hot Zone

## *Standing in the Fire: Leading High-Heat Meetings with Clarity, Calm, and Courage*

By Larry Dressler. Softcover. 236 pages. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, [www.berrettkoehler.com](http://www.berrettkoehler.com).

By Terrence Fernsler



“Becoming an observer of your emotions will minimize defensive reactions.”

Becoming an observer of your emotions will minimize defensive reactions and help you make deliberate choices during heated meetings. You need to focus on the present, keep an open mind, maintain compassion, and ground yourself in core principles. All these things require knowledge and practice.

It's important to prepare for high-heat situations beforehand and take time for reflection afterward. Contemplation is fundamental. It fosters rejuvenation so that you can catalyze positive change, not only in meetings but throughout your organization and your life. **S**

*Terrence Fernsler has been a nonprofit professional for over 30 years and is currently a candidate for a Master's in Nonprofit Leadership degree at Seattle University.*

**F**acilitating meetings often leads to heated situations in which participants become polarized, angry, fearful, or confused. It's difficult to know what to say or do in these situations, especially for the person leading the meeting. In this book, Larry Dressler suggests how to prepare for such situations so that you can keep from becoming anxious or defensive, and describes how to be a change agent in a heated meeting. Such meetings can be challenging, but they also hold great potential for creativity.

It's easy to become swept up in discordant groups unless you learn to recognize their creative potential and use your presence to hold the group together. You need to allow space for strong emotions, conflict, and complexity.

“Heated meetings can be devastating, but they also hold great potential for creativity.”

## NOURISH THE LEADER IN YOU

The wisdom in *Standing in the Fire* stretches far beyond meetings. Its advice will help you become a stronger person, facilitator, and leader:

**Become familiar with your self-limiting patterns.** Hold your beliefs to the light, and ask yourself if they're serving you.

**Step into your “discomfort zone.”** Attend talks by people with views different from yours. Listen to radio shows with commentators who make you want to scream. Pay attention to opinions you might label “stupid.” Note how you can acknowledge different perspectives without agreeing with them.

**Be compassionate toward yourself.** You can't open your heart to others till you give up self-hate and self-blame.

**Bring relaxed attention to each moment.** In times of chaos, take stock of your physical state, and acknowledge your feelings.

**Be sure you have an ongoing set of practices** that prepare you to be your best as a leader. These contemplative practices might include yoga, conscious breathing, deep relaxation, prayer, meditation, tai chi, self-guided inquiry, or journaling.


## Notice Your Body

During your next meeting, try these small physical adjustments, and see how they affect your mind and emotions.

- **Feel** the soles of your feet in contact with the ground.
- **Pull** your shoulders back and open your pelvis.
- **Relax** your jaw and lift your head.
- **Straighten** your back, extending the top of your head toward the sky.
- **Smile.**
- **Let your in-breath** go all the way down to your belly.
- **Change** the volume and tone of your voice.
- **Stop** talking. Concentrate on listening and being aware of your surroundings.

## The Power of Mentors

People with mentors are invariably more successful than those who go it alone, and the best way to find mentors is to ask people if they'd like to mentor you. Almost everyone is flattered to be asked to serve in a mentoring role. Before you ask, however, keep in mind this advice from Ben Casnocha's *My Start-Up Life* (Jossey-Bass, [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)):


- **Understand the difference** between mentors and advisors. You consult advisors on professional issues, while mentors veer into personal matters. It's important to have both.
- **Diversify.** Maintain an eclectic group of mentors so that you have people to consult about all sorts of different things – some to ask about issues of emotion and spirit, others to help you digest complex situations, and so on.
- **Find good people.** Do research on people and know what makes them tick before initiating a relationship.
- **Give as well as receive.** Mentors need to derive a return from helping you. Provide plenty of appreciation, and ensure the relationship isn't a one-way street, or it won't last. 

## A Guide to Good Management

A powerful new book may be the most important addition to your library. Although it's only 93 pages long, this little paperback sums up what's needed to gain the trust of your stakeholders and the public.

*Advancing Nonprofit Stewardship through Self-Regulation: Translating Principles into Practice* (published by Kumarian Press ([www.kpbooks.com](http://www.kpbooks.com))) is based on 33 principles proposed by Independent Sector ([www.independentsector.org](http://www.independentsector.org)). These principles are designed to help nonprofits regulate themselves by following best practices for sound, ethical management.

In Part 1, Christopher Corbett lists the 33 principles, with brief comments on each. In Part 2, he translates the principles into bylaws, which your organization can implement readily.

The best way for nonprofits to avoid onerous government restrictions is to regulate themselves. Using these bylaws may be the best way to do so. 

— reviewed by Terrence Fernsler

## I'm Sorry, You Have Two Minutes

Imagine this. You've worked for several weeks to prepare a 30-minute presentation. You walk into the room and they say, "Listen, sorry, we're really behind... uh...can you cover this in two minutes?"

What do you do? First, count your lucky stars. That's right. This is your day. You've just been presented with an opportunity to wow your audience.


There's nothing more impressive than a person who knows how to be brief. What every meeting attendee longs for is a presentation that takes *less* time. You can feel them exhale when you promise, "Sure, let me just summarize," and then, you actually do.

So here's the drill. Right before you put your presentation to bed, take a half hour to prepare a two-minute outline composed of:

- your main idea in 25 words or less
- three supporting statements, facts, or observations
- your final recommendation or call to action.

Don't consider yourself ready until you've done this. Even if you get your full time, you might end up on the elevator with someone who asks, "So, what are you working on?" Nice to have that 25-word summary in your back pocket.


Imagine those two minutes, and figure out how to shine. Prepare to astound your audience. When you walk out the door, they'll want to applaud, and they won't forget what you've said.

Two minutes? Not a problem! In fact, what an opportunity. 

— by Suzanne Bates, [www.thepowerspeakerblog.com](http://www.thepowerspeakerblog.com),  
[www.batescommunication.com](http://www.batescommunication.com)


## Study Underscores Importance of Background Checks

Over 20% of volunteer background checks conducted by nonprofits revealed serious issues, including drug-related and sex-related offenses, murder and kidnapping charges, and cases of registered sex offenders, a new study finds. The study, "The Power of Positive Information" ([www.lexisnexis.com/nonprofit](http://www.lexisnexis.com/nonprofit)) shares best practices and program recommendations:

- **Develop** a standard, automated screening policy.
- **Re-screen** volunteers on a regular basis.
- **Supplement** a national criminal database search with a county-level search. 

## Develop a Strategy the Smart Way

Strategic planning fails when it has fuzzy objectives, too many people, and a rushed schedule. When you need to develop a strategy fast, do it the right way:

- **Define the challenge.** Your leadership team can't settle on a path forward unless everyone agrees on the problem you're trying to solve. Once you're aligned, focus on core questions and avoid meandering discussions.
- **Identify the destination.** Define the future state and how to get there. Don't try to please everyone; make the hard choices that lead to a clear strategy.
- **Develop options.** Changes in the marketplace are inevitable. Come up with alternative approaches that let you respond to uncertain events. 

— adapted from “Six Strategy Insights” from *Harvard Business Review* blog (blogs.hbr.org)

## Communicating to Pack a Punch


If you want to write stronger reports, speeches, and presentations, take the advice of top journalists: Don't bury the lead.

Journalist, author, screenwriter, and funny woman Nora Ephron once told a story to illustrate this point. When Ephron was in high school, the teacher asked the class to write a lead for this story:

“Kenneth L. Peters, principal of Beverly Hills High School, announced today that the entire school faculty will travel to Sacramento next Thursday for a colloquium in new teaching methods. Among the speakers will be anthropologist Margaret Mead, college professor Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins, and California governor Edmund ‘Pat’ Brown.”

Ephron condensed the five Ws — who, what, where, when, and why — into a sentence: “Governor Pat Brown, Margaret Mead, and Robert Maynard Hutchins will address the Beverly Hills High School faculty Thursday in Sacramento.”

The teacher collected the leads and scanned them. Then he said, “The lead of the story is this: ‘There will be no school next Thursday.’”

It's not enough to know the who, what, when, where, and how; you have to know why it matters. And whether it's a report, story, speech, or presentation, when you report what matters early on, you're guaranteed to garner attention. 

— by Randy Siegel, randy@buildourleaders.com

## How to Have a Difficult Conversation

Use these ideas next time you need to have a difficult conversation:

**Decide on your goal in advance.** It isn't always necessary, or even productive, to bring up an issue and resolve it in the same conversation. Whatever your goal, be clear about it, and share it with your conversational partner.


Suppose, for example, that every time you send out an organization-wide e-mail, your colleague Jen hits “Reply All” and vents her frustrations, criticisms, and disapproval of your ideas to everyone in the organization. Your goal may simply be to learn more about it, so you might say, “I'd like to talk about how you respond to my e-mails and learn more about your reactions to them.”

**Explore the issue together,** as opposed to putting the other person on the “witness stand.” State in general terms what the issue is, and then discuss it together. You might say, for example, “I've noticed that you reply to everyone when I send out e-mails. I was wondering if we can look at that together.” Working together to learn more will avoid making the other person defensive or uncooperative.

**Spend more time listening than talking.** A key leadership skill is understanding other points of view. After raising the issue, wait for the other person to respond rather than giving more of your perspective. Ask questions instead of making statements.

**Consider alternatives.** Ask for the other person's ideas about handling the situation. You might say, “Jen, what else can you do about your frustration over my e-mails without communicating that frustration to the entire staff?” She'll be more likely to accept an alternative that she offers.

**Work toward what's next.** Have a clear understanding of what kind of follow up is expected, and agree on a time to talk or check in again. For example, you and Jen may decide that in the future, when she's frustrated, she'll shoot you an e-mail as a way of venting, without involving the rest of the staff. You and she may agree to try that, and to talk again in two weeks to see how it's going.

**Be flexible in your approach.** If the other person doesn't appear ready to receive your feedback, or becomes defensive, learn more by asking questions. The answers will give you additional data that may lead you to change the goal of your meeting or adjust how you want to address the issue. 

— adapted from *The Weiman Consulting Letter*, www.weimanconsulting.com



# SERIOUS BOTTOM LINE IMPACT

As a nonprofit financial executive, you know better than anyone how **every penny counts**. But did you know that every year **millions of nonprofit dollars are wasted** paying unnecessary taxes?

501(c) Agencies Trust has been serving the nonprofit community for over 30 years by effectively managing their unemployment programs and helping them safely and securely **exercise thier legal right to opt out** of the state SUI unemployment system.

The Trust saves its 1,500 members around **\$20 million dollars annually**. Membership benefits include 60+ training webinars annually, an HR Hotline, and unlimited access to a group purchasing program for deep discounts. Outsourcing your unemployment program saves money and staff time.



*Nearly 30 years ago, Y-USA was one of the founding members of the 501(c) Agencies Trust and since that time, hundreds of Ys have joined the Trust. Those Ys and Y-USA have saved millions of dollars, allowing more of our financial and staff resources to put to use changing lives and building communities, empowering our mission. The 501(c) Agencies Trust continues to be a trusted partner of the YMCA Movement.*



*Jim Mellor, CFO  
Y-USA*



**Get more details and a free quote today.**

(800) 631-2967

[www.501cTrust.org](http://www.501cTrust.org)



The Society for Nonprofits  
P.O. Box 510354  
Livonia, Michigan 48151

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Traverse City, MI  
Permit No. 29



# Wish You Had a Money Tree?

**Why not call NPPG?**



Non-Profit Purchasing Group

**1-877-THX-NPPG**

**Serving organizations like yours  
throughout the United States  
and Canada**

**Helping Those Who Help Others**

**The Non-Profit Purchasing Group is dedicated exclusively to non-profit and small business communities.** We are passionate about helping organizations save money on their most commonly purchased goods and services. Try our online savings calculator to see how much money you can save! **For as little as \$19/year, everyday savings on everyday purchases are just a click away.™**

**[nppg.org](http://nppg.org) (US) or [nppg.ca](http://nppg.ca) (Canada)**