



Fast Fundraising Facts & Other Essentials

Value-Laden Organizations: How Your Nonprofit Mission is Personal

How important is the mission of your nonprofit to your organization's progress toward success and maturity?

According to Vikki Kestell, Organizational Development and Technology Consultant and Ph.D. student at the University of New Mexico, the connection between your mission and the personal values of your volunteers, donors and staff is critical.

Nonprofits as Value-Laden Organizations

Nonprofits are what I term "value-laden" organizations. They exist to promote goals or objectives that have their foundations in very explicit values or ideologies—hopefully well articulated in the organization's mission statement.

People won't generally become donors, volunteers, employees, or board members for an organization whose mission runs contrary to their own values. They choose to volunteer time, donate money, and work for nonprofits when their own values and those of the nonprofit are very similar or "congruent." The greater the match between an organization's espoused values and the values of its people, the greater the level of "mission congruency" within the organization.

Whatever principles you espouse, they usually reflect your core values—those values that make you uniquely "you." In the same way, a nonprofit's mission is personal to the people invested in that organization. All people need to know that what they sacrifice their time, energy, and money to has real, personal significance. This is the seat of passion in the nonprofit workplace.

Thus the connection between the mission of our organization and our organization's constituency is personal, and the importance of healthy mission congruency cannot be understated.

The Bottom Line Is the Mission

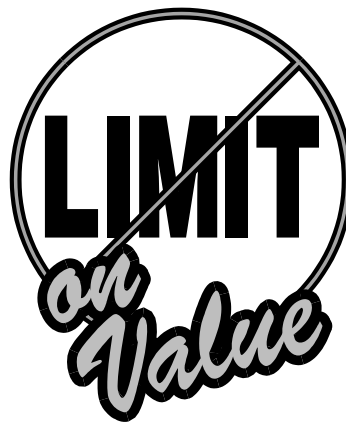
We spend much time and effort in the nonprofit sector on fundraising because money is a tool necessary to further our organization's mission. However, the bottom line of a nonprofit is not the bottom line. The *mission* of the nonprofit is its "bottom line." We might say that when we miss our mission "mark," we're operating in the red even if the ink in the ledger is black. When we focus on the tool of money to the detriment of the

mission, our organizations may experience mission "slip" or "shift." Slip is recognizable when our programs or activities no longer "map" directly to our mission, values, and/or objectives. Shift is diagnosed when our programs or activities are quite obviously other than what we espouse as our mission, values, and/or objectives.

When mission slip or shift occurs, our people become confused or disenchanted. What happens when our constituents' mission expectations are defeated? When our volunteers and donors decide that their values are no longer reflected in our nonprofit, they leave and they leave in a very unhappy state.

Have you seen this in your organization? If so, it's probably happened more than once. A cycle of turnovers is one symptom of mission incongruency and makes progress toward organizational maturity and stability very difficult to achieve.

To learn more, turn the page...



What We Really Believe In

How important is it that a nonprofit look for “a good fit” between its mission and that of its employees and key people? Mission congruency makes for long-term partnerships. Long-term relationships and partnering make for organizational growth and stability.

I worked for a short time in a Native American nonprofit organization that provided Native college scholarship aid. I’m Caucasian, or white. Actually, I’m whiter than white—I know people who would call me “white bread,” but even *I* know that I’m way beyond that: I’m “enriched, *bleached* white bread,” being one of those blondes with even blonde eyebrows and lashes. I’m also a “typical” middle-class, “lost-my-roots-somewhere in Europe” American. I saw the Native organization as having real value and worked hard to make it successful but, as I’m not Native American, the organization’s mission wasn’t truly personal to me. I was competent in my job, but I couldn’t relate to Native family and cultural norms, religious practices, languages, and music.

I didn’t stay long at my Native American position because I couldn’t escape the fact that I could not find a *personal connection* to the organization’s mission. I resigned when a position with a better “fit” came my way. My move wasn’t a sign of bigotry or a lack of caring for young Native men and women; it was honesty. “Mission fit” is critical to building a lasting employee and/or volunteer base, and people with strong loyalties and personal commitments are essential to achieving long-term objectives and enduring, sustainable success. Not having that personal commitment, I couldn’t contribute long-term to the organization.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) members have generally lost a loved one to a drunk driver. Runners in the annual Breast Cancer marathon run for those close to them fighting the good fight or who have valiantly lost their struggle. Christian schoolteachers often work for less than

their public school counterparts because they espouse the life-changing principles of Christian education. The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is “the largest *constituency-based* national Hispanic organization, serving all Hispanic nationality groups in all regions of the country,” and the African American Workers Union mission statement reads: “. . . *we* are responsible for building institutions which will do right by us” (emphases mine). All of these organizations underscore the importance of personal commitment on the part of members of a value-laden organization.

Assessing and Aligning

When mixed messages pass between leaders and followers, how does that affect organizational morale, employee or volunteer retention, and long-term strategic focus? **We need to know our mission, speak our mission, align all of our programs and activities to our mission, and attract people who love that mission as much as we do.**

Take your organization’s “mission congruency” temperature. Ask your members, volunteers, donors, and employees (individually) to tell you what your organization’s primary goals and objectives are. Are they able to accurately articulate your organization’s mission? Ask them how their volunteerism or membership directly contributes to the success of that mission. Are their tasks actually actionable toward that mission’s success?

If you are surprised or dismayed by the answers you’re getting it may be time to revisit your mission, articulate it at every level of your nonprofit, and realign every program or activity toward that mission’s success. **Remember: your mission is your bottom line.**

—Vikki L. Kestell

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Some New Things of Interest

According to Vertis, a Baltimore-based marketing and advertising firm, a survey of 2,000 adults this year showed that 66% said they planned to make non-monetary donations in the next year. The survey also showed that 59% of donors said they were most likely to donate money to an organization that had sent them a direct mail appeal. 53% said they read fundraising and nonprofit direct mail. When deciding which nonprofit or fundraising mail they opened, respondents listed the following factors: personalized mail (62%), timing of the mail (59%), a free gift (32%), a special offer (31%) and dated material (30%). For the full report visit www.vertisinc.com/about/news_events.asp.

If your organization accepts gifts of goods, don’t make the mistake of assessing a value to the donated items! According to the IRS, assessing the value of donated goods is the responsibility of the donor. So, as a donor, there are a couple of great tools to help you assess the value of those clothes you just stuffed into a donation box. “It’s Deductible”, by Income Dynamics, list values for more than 800 items of clothing and guarantees the values conform to the IRS requirements for donated items. See also “It’s Deductible” software by Turbo Tax for an even more thorough listing of fair market values for donated items.

Internet Resources For Nonprofits

The IRS has published 2 new brochures to help nonprofits understand tax laws conferring tax-exempt status. Visit the IRS web site at www.irs.gov and download Publication 4220 and 4221 for more information.

If you are struggling with job descriptions for staff and volunteers and want a template, try these sites, but remember to customize the templates for your particular organization and its needs.



www.workforce.com/index.html is not aimed at nonprofits but has useful related information. The Business Owner's Tool Kit also has valuable information for nonprofits at www.toolkit.cch.com.

And here are some great

resources on establishing internal financial controls for your nonprofit:

www.delawarenonprofit.org/FinMgmtFaq1.html is written in plain English for those who are NOT experts in finance. www.ucsc.edu/finaff/cc/tips/sepduy.htm has a good section defining the various roles that should be separated. Lastly, www.washington.edu/research/gca/uwin/checks.html has controls that can be put in place for even the smallest of nonprofit organizations.

Finally, some old favorites: www.grantstation.com for a great e-newsletter. www.charitychannel.com for more than 100 special interest internet forums at an amazingly reasonable cost (\$24/year). www.nonevents.com is my "other" web site offering "virtual" events as a fundraising tool.

If you know some great Internet sites, please send me an email so I can share them in the next newsletter!

TWO GREAT BOOKS AVAILABLE NOW:

THE ABCs OF BUILDING BETTER BOARDS and FAST FUNDRAISING FACTS FOR FAME & FORTUNE

Now you can add two great books to your agency library. **The ABCs of Building Better Boards** is just what you need to improve your Board's potential. It includes ideas for recruitment, retention and recognition and has some great forms for you to copy and use.

Learn how to deal with unproductive Board members and how to better define the roles of staff and Board. There is a chapter on financial and fiduciary facts, one on simple parliamentary procedure and much, much more.

Discover how Board Job Descriptions and annual Commitment Letters will dramatically improve your Board's effectiveness. See how a truly effective Nominating Committee will lead to a better Board.

Get good ideas for more efficient Board management and administration, including how to set up and manage effective committees.

It's only \$24.95 plus shipping and handling. Take advantage of a volume discount of up to 20% and give this book to all new Board members as part of their orientation.

Fast Fundraising Facts for Fame & Fortune is full of ideas to improve your fundraising, including how to ask effectively, special events essentials and new ideas for fundraising.

Help volunteers get over the fear of asking for money and in-kind resources for your organization. Learn how marketing principles will make fundraising easier.

Learn about **Jean's Ten Rules for Fundraising Success** and apply them to your organization immediately. This book puts the **FUN** into **FUND**raising and gives good examples and ideas that really work, rather than using hard to follow formulas and theories.

At only \$19.95 plus shipping and handling, it's a Must Have for your fundraising committee members!

Email me at Jean@jblockinc.com to discuss volume discounts for staff or volunteers.

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HOW CAN I HELP YOU? TAKE THIS QUICKIE QUIZ

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Is your Board of Directors functioning at its highest level? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| How successful is your current fundraising? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Do volunteers need help asking for money and in-kind resources? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Does your organization have a dynamic strategic plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |
| Are you having fun? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES | <input type="checkbox"/> NO |

Please give me a call if you want to turn any NO into a YES. I can help with:

- turning your Board into a dynamic group of volunteers,
- facilitating a strategic planning session,
- analyzing your current fundraising and suggesting some new ideas, and
- training volunteers and staff in becoming more effective fundraisers.

Here is what people have said about my training and facilitation:

"Jean Block is a powerhouse in the Non-Profit world. You don't move about these circles long before her name is prominent in the conversation. Her commitment to training, fundraising, motivating, and cultivation is unsurpassed. To say she is an influence is to miss the point. She gives new meaning to the word enthusiasm! You don't know Jean, you experience her! She is a force unlike any other I have every met."

Randy Gleason
UNM Children's Hospital

"I attended the Corporate Sponsorship Workshop - WOW! You were amazing! What an OPPORTUNITY for me! Your presentation style was EXCELLENT. By far the best workshop I've been to in a long time (content and style both!)."

Vicki Kopplin
Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota

"I attended your workshop in St. Louis and left there feeling so uplifted by your motivation. Your training - to make us all savvy marketers - has paid off. Even in this economy, our underwriting is up and our auction donations have blown away everyone in town! We simply feel empowered to ask anyone and everyone AND to tell them WHY we are their market. It's working! Thank you!"

Kirsten Wagmeister
Junior League of Evansville

"Thank you for the awesome training sessions...As someone (who) would normally walk over hot coals before asking for \$, I was amazed by your session. I actually feel fired up at fundraising. I went right home and called two friends with ideas for their non-profits. I hope to give a presentation to my Board encouraging them to have you train us."

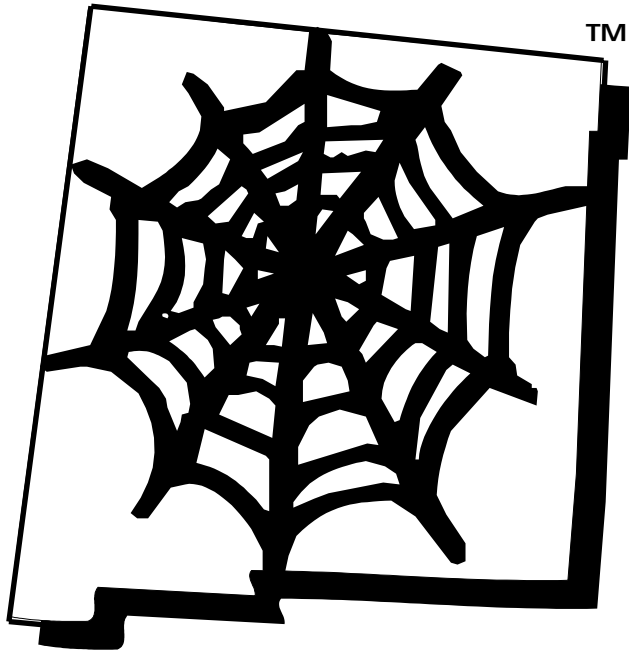
Heather Harden, Finance Council Director
Junior League of Champaign-Urbana

"I just have to tell you that you made such an incredible impact when you spoke to our Board. I can't begin to tell you how many times your words of wisdom have been brought up at our Executive, Board and Committee meetings. In fact, just today, in two different conversations I was having, your ideas were quoted by others. Thank you for inspiring us to think in a new direction."

Kim Erdel
Junior League of Springfield, Missouri

"Jean conducted an extremely well organized and productive [Board] retreat, one that I can say with confidence that our members count as the finest ever conducted for us. Jean's follow-up report was in-depth and meaty, and both Board and staff have referred to it time and again. The knowledge of boardmanship the members took with them has made a remarkable difference in their levels of commitment and support."

Eileen Cook, Executive Director
Casa Esperanza



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Our Nonprofit Clients Include:

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- Barrett Foundation
- Casa Esperanza
- Goodwill Industries of New Mexico
- Jewish Family Service of Albuquerque
- New Mexico Charities
- New Mexico Holocaust & Intolerance Museum and Study Center
- New Mexico Mortgage Lenders Association
- New Mexico Society of Hazardous Materials Managers
- NM Chapter - Society for Healthcare Strategy and Market Development
- Solomon Schechter Day School
- United Way of Central New Mexico
- Wildlife West Nature Park

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