



Reconnecting and Reengaging in 2021: Building Strong Nonprofit Teams for the Future

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The chaos and complexity theory explains the organizational change in terms of ordered patterns of activity that emerge from spontaneous self-organization when “attractors” (Morgan, 1997) and attractor patterns shift. The coronavirus pandemic pushed our society to the edge of chaos. COVID-19 forced individuals to find different ways of shopping, schooling, and socializing; businesses to find new ways to serve their customers; nonprofits to look at different ways of serving their communities, and the government to bend on some regulations. Everyone scrambled to create infrastructure to support the resulting transformation.

Nonprofit organizations often operate within a good deal of uncertainty, even in good times. During a crisis, organizations may need to quickly implement changes. Nonprofit employers have had to retract, restore, and in some cases, reinvent their human capital management systems and processes to align with the new normal. This document, created by University of San Diego students studying LEAD 505: Developing Human Capital, offers some basic considerations and strategies for nonprofit organizations related to managing their workforce in times of crisis.

Source: Morgan, G., (1997). Images of organization. SAGE Publications, Inc., p. 263.



HUMAN RESOURCES AND TALENT DRAIN

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION

A recent Society for Human Resource Management study showed that employee retention was considered a top priority by 47% of nonprofit leadership. Employee development is a good place to start when strategizing for employee retention and engagement.

WHY IS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT SEEN AS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN RETAINING EMPLOYEES?

Lack of upward mobility and lower than market pay contribute to nonprofit employee retention. How and why has the nonprofit sector steadily become more robust in recent years? In 2016 the sector employed 12.3 million people with 1 in 10 jobs in the nonprofit sector, according to a 2019 John Hopkins study.

The strategy for making sure employees have access to further training and development, according to a recent Better Buys survey which Brandman University reported, leads to employees being 15% more likely to stay engaged in a job and 34% higher retention than those who did not have access to those same opportunities. The nonprofit sector is spearheading the practices necessary for steady employment through these strategies.

In fact, 93% of employees surveyed, according to a Workforce Learning Report in 2018, say that if they felt like an organization or company is invested in their growth and development in their career, they'd stay longer.

Why Retention and not Recruitment?

Efforts made to develop and retain employees affects the bottom line positively and safeguards loss of profit, revenue, and time. It is much more costly and expensive to have to go through recruitment, hiring, and training than it does to develop the current pool of employees. An estimate from The Society for Human Research Management indicates that the cost of hiring and recruitment can cost up to 40-60% of that position's annual salary.

UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING

Response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be used as a blueprint for organizations finding creative ways to engage and retain employees during a crisis by offering them upskilling or reskilling strategies.

Upskilling = learning new skills to expand the capabilities in a current position

Reskilling = broadening knowledge base to adjacent skills

BENEFITS TO RESKILLING

Organization:

- Creates a culture of continuous learning.
- Keeps the focus on the organization's mission.
- Fosters knowledge transfer and removes work silos.

Managers:

- Forces future focus.
- Creates an engaged workforce.
- Improves employee retention.
- Offers a pipeline of qualified employees.
- Lower onboarding and initial training costs.

Employees:

- Greater opportunity for advancement.
- Greater engagement.
- Opens career paths.

54% of all employees, including for-profit and nonprofit organizations, are at risk of job displacement from technological changes and need upskilling or reskilling training.

Pre-pandemic, only 30% of employees at risk of job displacement from technological changes were receiving upskilling training, citing financial investment as the primary barrier to providing more such training.

EMPLOYEE ATTRIBUTES PRIME FOR RESKILLING:

Self-starters: Employees who take initiative, set goals, and are hungry to pick up new skills.

Excellent time managers: Employees who can manage their current schedules with new training programs.

Posses the desire for reskilling: Don't force employees to learn if they don't want to.

RESOURCES FOR RESKILLING

[Six Steps to Reskilling](#) - evaluate your organization and create a plan for reskilling employees

[Career Pathing](#) - create career pathways with employees that focus on developing plans, setting goals, and taking action to proactively navigate their careers.

[Community Education](#) - take advantage of free training classes in your city such as the San Diego College of Continuing Education

[Education to Go](#) - Discover online training programs to provide reskilling, upskilling, and advanced career training.

RECRUITMENT IN A DIFFERENT MANNER

THE BENEFITS OF OUTSOURCING

For small nonprofits that cannot have a human resources staff, it is recommended to seek a human resources company's service like Oasis Advantage in San Diego <https://www.oasisadvantage.com/>. These companies can assist the organization with the different legalities and formats to identify promoting staff. One way to learn if a staff member is ready for a promotion is through a Leadership Development Plan to evaluate if the person is prepared for advancement and decide whether promoting within the organization is the desired outcome. Finding talent within the organization saves time and resources. For example, it costs more time and resources to hire new staff than to keep them. In addition, developing staff creates interest and creativity.

NON-RESTRICTED FUNDING

According to the U.S Department of Labor, employers with less than 500 employees are considered small. Small nonprofits do not invest in training and development as much as for-profit businesses. It is more difficult due to the budget limitation (Millesen & Bies, 2005). Small nonprofits must seek a way to apply for funding to cover the training costs for their staff. Nonprofits who are consistently training their staff in their interest areas are more prompt to stay in the organization for a longer period of time.

Create alerts for grants available. This will save staff and board members a great deal of time searching the internet; instead, you will get notifications via email. Miller (2010) states, "subscribe to blogs of people who talk about issues you care about, follow them on Twitter, and become friends or fans of their Facebook page" (p. 31).

How to Create an Alert:

1. Go to <https://www.google.com/alerts>.
2. In the box at the top, enter a topic to follow.
3. To change the settings, click "Show Options" and then select:
 - Frequency of notification
 - Types of sites
 - Language preferences
 - Geographic preferences
 - Number of possible results
 - Account(s) to be alerted
4. Click "Create Alert." Emails will be sent when matching search results are found.

ENGAGEMENT IN A VIRTUAL SPACE

One lesson learned from the COVID-19 pandemic is that remote working is here to stay. It is important that organizations understand how to engage employees in a virtual setting so that everyone is motivated and engaged to work. Here are some ways to ensure that your employees stay engaged with your organization's mission.

SHOWING APPRECIATION FOR YOUR STAFF

Engaging remote workers can be tough, which is why showing appreciation is a great way to ensure they stay inspired and motivated. At the Travis Manion Foundation, a veterans service organization, all employees receive a handwritten appreciation letter on their work anniversary and also receive a gift box for the holidays. Appreciation is a thoughtful way to bring employees together and inspire them to keep working hard even when they are at home. You can even take employee appreciation a step further by using every opportunity possible to recognize people for their good work. Those opportunities could be during a Zoom meeting, a monthly staff newsletter, or even an email that is sent to everyone in the organization.

HOSTING ACTIVITIES THAT ALLOW YOUR EMPLOYEES TO DECOMPRESS

The Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective (BEAM) provides its staff with optional opportunities to relieve stress such as meditation or events that build community. These offerings are not required so that way employees do not feel pressured to hop on another Zoom meeting if they wish to not participate. Taking the time to offer these types of events can demonstrate that an organization cares about employee wellness and is a way to create connectedness in a virtual environment.

ADDRESS TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES

Everyone's understanding of technological systems is different, which is why it is important for an organization to understand the varying levels of skill and ability. After being forced to adapt to a virtual setting this past year, Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) concluded that technological barriers and a lack of understanding of systems and processes can deter its volunteers from participating. This same logic can be applied to a work setting, so it is important to take the time to understand the team's varying levels of comfortability with technology. Staff who feel comfortable with technology are more set up for success in a virtual work environment.

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MENTAL HEALTH, BURNOUT, AND SOCIAL ISOLATION



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices (MentalHealth.org). The lack of human interaction during the recent pandemic has led to increased loneliness, stress, depression, and substance use disorders (Young, 2008). Poor mental health can negatively affect employees' performance and productivity (Cadorette & Agnew, 2017).

HOW MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES MANIFEST IN THE WORKPLACE

- Lack of engagement with co-workers
- Affect job performance and productivity
- Reduced physical capacity and daily functioning
- Inappropriate or ineffective communication with coworkers and others

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES AND TIPS

- Conduct virtual wellness checks by having a weekly check-in between employees and supervisors.
- Make mental health self-assessment tools available to all employees.
- Create a virtual workout group for employees.
- Check-in regularly with employees. In larger organizations, supervisors and team leaders should consider 2-4 employee group check-ins per week with a supervisor or buddy system to maintain social contact.
- Host an employee game or trivia night.
- Offer counseling sessions and other mental health resources.
- Send a wellness basket with a personalized card to employees.
- Serve as a wellness champion. Model behavior that prioritizes physical and mental wellbeing.

EMPLOYEE TIPS

- Practice self-care by getting adequate sleep, eating healthy, exercising, and socializing with others in a safe manner.
- Get educated on recognizing the warning signs of depression, and encourage others to seek help, when appropriate.
- Be empathetic and open-minded about the experiences and feelings of colleagues.
- Share personal experiences with others to help reduce stigma.
- Encourage employers to offer mental health and stress management education and resources that meet their employees' needs and interests, if not already in place.
- Participate in employer-sponsored programs and activities to learn skills and get the support needed to improve mental health.

BURNOUT

The World Health Organization (2020) defines burnout as a syndrome “resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.” Burnout can affect employees in any sector; however, non-profit executives and employees are particularly susceptible to burnout (Moss, 2019). Increased demands for services with fewer resources and staff availability, working in unsafe conditions during a crisis or working remotely while perhaps also taking care of elderly parents and homeschooling children can lead to employees experiencing dramatic increases in stress levels. As such, addressing burnout should be a priority for all levels of an organization.

Burnout has typically been addressed as an individual, employee-level problem. Employers should and often encourage employees to pursue physical and emotional wellness actively. There is an abundance of self-health resources available online on fitness, nutrition, sleep, meditation, yoga, and counseling. More recent research suggests placing individual-centered solutions within the larger organizational context for a more holistic approach to managing employee burnout (Bakker & de Vries, 2021). Top-down strategies, coupled with employee-level stress management techniques, may help regulate employee stress and fatigue more effectively (2021).

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS EMPLOYEE BURNOUT

- Offer professional development training.
- Make workflow changes.
- Foster a culture of innovation, transparency, and collaboration.
- Invite questions, candor, and input.
- Practice empathetic leadership.
- Check-in with employees at regular intervals and through multiple channels.
- Reimagine physical workspaces as "culture spaces" (Fayard, et al., 2021).
- Ensure employees know where to go to get their questions answered.
- Find creative and meaningful ways to help employees stay socially connected to each other.

(Sources: Moss, J.; Bakker, A. and de Vries, J. D.; Fayard, et al.)

SOCIAL ISOLATION

With a significant boost in employees working in remote positions, an increased percentage of the workforce looks toward flexible schedules. This can lead to physical distancing, which can lead to emotional distancing. Loneliness is the emotional separation from others, while isolation is the physical separation. Because mental and physical health are interconnected, it is important to address them as a concurrent public health risk during times of crisis.

HOW SOCIAL ISOLATION MANIFESTS IN EMPLOYEES

- Increased stress levels and bad decision-making.
- Missed deadlines.
- Stops offering input.
- Calling in sick or changes schedule often.
- Lack of interaction with colleagues.
- Skips meetings.
- They only talk about work.
- Lack of interest in career development.

STRATEGIES AND TIPS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

- Create as many opportunities for safe interaction as possible.
- Ensure social interaction occurs with those close to the work being done:
 - Regular conference calls and group video meetings.
 - Foster collaboration with structured virtual activities, retreats, summits, or conferences.
- Help employees understand if their personality aligns with the challenges of remote work.
- Communicate early and often, build trusting relationships, and pay close attention to your virtual team members to see if they become disconnected.
- Create a culture of open and intentional connection can prevent problems before they start.
- Maintain a chat platform.
- Allow and encourage social breaks.

EMPLOYEE TIPS

- Work at least one day per week outside of your home.
- Create an unplugging ritual.
- Talk more than just work with coworkers.
- Use a collaboration tool such as Slack to remote work more efficiently.
- Encourage a "cameras on" culture.
- Find real-life opportunities to meet with others.
- Attend team retreats, summits, and in-person meetings.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Podcast:

<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/all-things-work/pages/dealing-with-social-isolation-due-to-coronavirus.aspx>

Articles:

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A photograph showing several hands of different skin tones stacked together in a supportive gesture. The hands are resting on a wooden table with various business documents, including charts and graphs, scattered around. The image is framed by a light blue background with white geometric lines.

REPRESENTATION, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY

REPRESENTATION, INCLUSION, AND EQUITY

As seen on the next slide (Where We're At), those leading San Diego nonprofits do not represent our community as a whole. As a sector that prides itself on helping others and creating impact, it is essential that we be leaders in the areas of representation, inclusion, and equity in the workplace so that we can best represent the communities we aim to serve. Below are tools and insights to help your organization start the journey to become representational, inclusive, and equitable nonprofit.

CREATING SHARED LANGUAGE

REPRESENTATION

To be visible, for someone to lead by example, to see yourself in others with a similar background, culture, class, or skin color to your own (Bramble).

EQUITY

Equity is what happens when all members of a diverse population of employees have equal opportunities and support to succeed and grow (Link, 2019).

INCLUSION

In inclusive organizations and societies, people of all identities and many styles can be fully themselves while also contributing to the larger collective, as valued and full members (Ferdman, 2017).

RACIAL EQUITY

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity is no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares (Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2020).

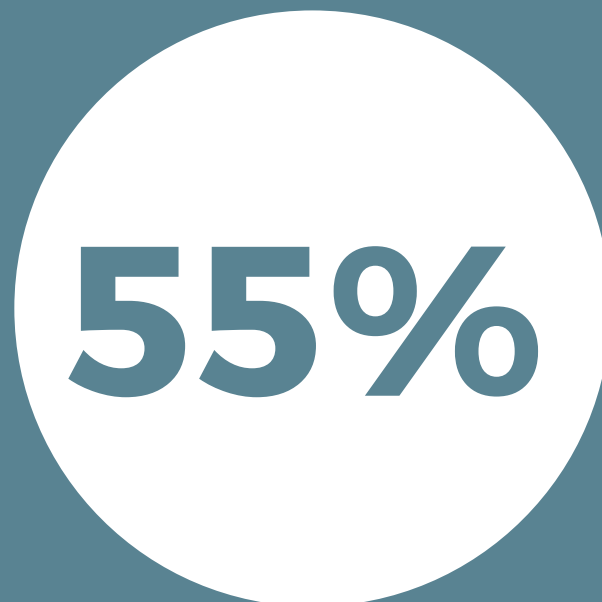
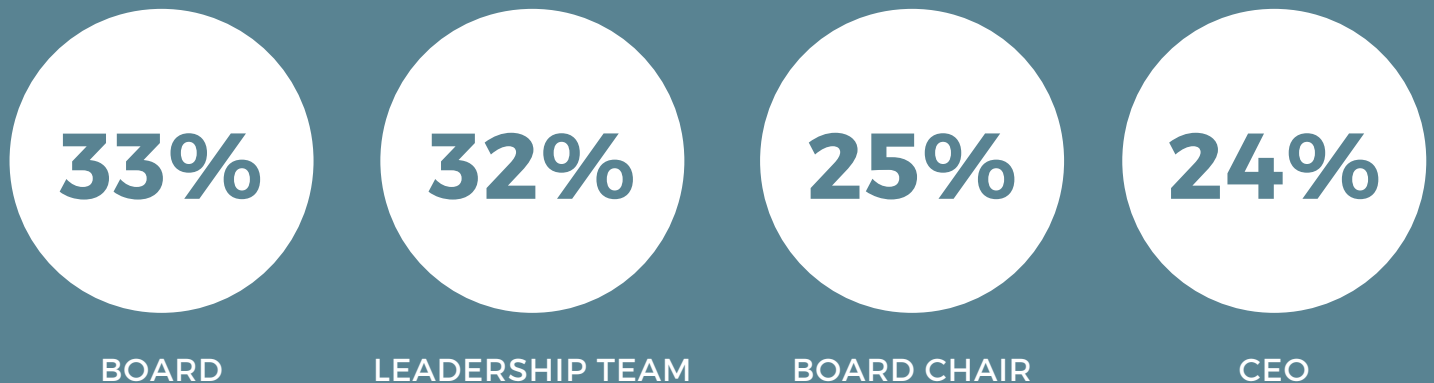
JUSTICE

Organizational justice refers to employee perceptions of fairness in the workplace. These perceptions can be classified into four categories: distributive, procedural, informational, and interactional (Rupp & Thornton-Lugo, 2015).

WHERE WE'RE AT

PERCENT OF PEOPLE WHO IDENTIFY AS BIPOC IN LOCAL NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

Data from the Nonprofit Institute's State of Nonprofits 2020 Report



PERCENT OF SAN DIEGO RESIDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS BIPOC

NEXT STEPS: BEYOND THE DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Creating a diversity statement is a great way to document your organization's vision and beliefs. But this work requires more than a statement. Actions need to be taken and change must come. Below are suggestions to help your organization start to create internal change.

Get your Board on board

- As laid out above, boards in San Diego need to do some work. It is important that nonprofit boards maintain respect while recruiting for people of color. Check out [Taylor's article](#) to learn more.

Know your "why"

- Identify the problem you are trying to solve and the impact you want to have as an organization- this will guide commitments, investments, and difficult conversations (Ward, 2020).

How do you stack up?

- Do a comparison of the demographics of your organization's target population and your board/staff. Do they look similar?

Ask the hard questions

- When you look at your organization and your partners, ask who isn't there and why. Be willing to bring up who is missing from the table in meetings.

Acknowledge bias as "groundwater" level

- Understanding bias is not just implicit, it is "groundwater" level. Examine the systems inherent to your organization that perpetuate bias.

Examine your norms

- Use [this worksheet](#) to address white dominant culture in your organization.

Set meaningful metrics and measure them

- As they say, what gets measured gets done. Check out these [8 steps to setting meaningful metrics](#) around diversity and inclusion.

Racism is in the system

- The core racist realities are manifested in each of society's major parts and each major part of U.S. society—the economy, politics, education, religion, the family—reflects the fundamental reality of systemic racism (Feagin, 2000).

Understand microaggressions

- Brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. (Sue et al., 2007).

Celebrate small wins

- Change does not need to be huge, immediate, or perfect. It does however need to happen, and it should be acknowledged when it does (Correll, 2017).



SPOTLIGHT: PAVING GREAT FUTURES

Paving Great Futures (PGF), a local 50(c)(3) nonprofit based out of San Diego, CA, is a minority-founded and operated organization that services primarily members from underserved communities throughout San Diego. What is unique about PGF is that 85% of their staff are lived experience experts solidifying their relationship as trusted credible messengers throughout the community that they serve. In 2019 an organizational assessment was conducted by a USD student consultation team that analyzed the entire organization. During this assessment, a recommendation had been made to diversify the Executive Board. At the time and since the conception of the organization the board was made up of 6 African American men, 2 African American women, and 1 Latina woman. The representation on this board was phenomenal but not an accurate depiction of the community that is served by PGF and wasn't seen as very inclusive. PGF utilized this feedback as a way to grow and practice more inclusion as well as diversity. The solution was to create a recruitment package and process that was appealing to a more diverse audience. PGF knew that they wanted the addition of board members to accurately represent the neighborhoods that they serviced, and to remain more inclusive to all diversity. They began a 6-month process to develop a "wish list" of potential board members who had a variety of skill sets, a multitude of ethnic backgrounds, diverse work experience, and a plethora of knowledge. Once the list was created and candidates were identified, PGF leadership began to personally reach out to build these connections and foster interest, interviews were conducted and after 7 years PGF had a new board that accurately told the story of the community. They now have representation from 7 ethnic backgrounds, 4 different languages are spoken, 5 women, and people who come from different communities.

"The hardest thing for PGF was thinking it was diverse since we are black-led, like our board so we are fine. We thought we had the accurate representation and it wasn't until someone externally came in and was able to help us see that we were not doing enough. This helped us to face some truths and to do something about them. We are proud of the board we have been honored to put together and look forward to always have those real moments to get it right."

- Ebonāy Lee (Director of Development)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Articles:

- [21 Signs You or Your Organization May Be the White Moderate Dr. King Warned About](#), Vu Le
- [Let's be real: Diversity and inclusion is a business issue](#), DeLisa Alexander
- [Message to White Allies from A Black Anti-Racism Expert: You're Doing It Wrong](#), Dr. David Camp
- [How to Promote Racial Equity in the Workplace](#), Robert Livingston

Articles (cont'd):

- [Women in the Workplace](#), McKinsey & Company
- [Toward a Racially Just Workplace](#), Laura Morgan Roberts, Anthony J. Mayo

Books:

- [Decolonizing Wealth](#), Edgar Villanueva

Resource List

- [Anti-racism resources for white people](#)
- [Resources to Help Create Racial Equity in the Workplace](#)

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EQUITY AT HOME AND WORK

EQUITY AT HOME AND WORK

DEFINING THE ISSUE

The Covid-19 Pandemic caused the nonprofit sector to redefine how it does business. Many nonprofit organizations were faced with changing the fundamental structures of programs they have operated since inception. As nonprofit organizations began to navigate the new world, challenges with equity and childcare became apparent.

They discovered that working from home could lead to physical pain from not having proper desks and chairs or even dental pain from jaw grinding and insomnia due to anxiety (Levine, 2020). While some employees transitioned and began working from home with ease, others struggled and found it “disruptive” and “unsettling” (Bancel et al., 2020). The disparity in individual home situations began to come into play. Working from home might seem like a convenient quick fix to an executive with a home office who can afford childcare. It can be challenging for someone with a lower salary and is a caregiver, to live in a crowded home (Ward, 2021).

The pandemic has disproportionately impacted women and people of color. The burden of childcare has been falling largely on mothers, who have been more likely to leave the labor force because of caregiving responsibilities. It may still harm career advancement for women who can telecommute because managers and supervisors are likely to believe employees away from the office are not as available as those working in a traditional office setting. (Managing Flexible Work Arrangements 2021).

CASE STUDIES

Some nonprofit organizations have identified these issues and are working to address them:

- Child Development Associates and YMCA- Providing childcare vouchers and support for essential workers and low-income families: [COVID-19 Community Response Fund Grants \\$11.4 Million to Support Local Families with Emergency Childcare, Other Needs](#)
- YW Boston- Providing organizations with digital workshops and resources to help them better understand the challenges faced by their employees: [Our Shared Sector: Why Nonprofits Should Center Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- Nonprofit HR-Providing telecommute and hybrid work schedule options. [69% Of Nonprofits Considering Long-Term Remote Work: Study](#)

CONSIDERATIONS & QUESTIONS

Consider the opportunities and challenges of remote work:

- *How will remote work impact relationships between managers, employees, clients, and stakeholders?*
- *Could remote work options help recruit and retain a diverse workforce?*

Determine the who, what, when, and how of remote work:

- *Who will be eligible for remote work and why?*
- *What tasks can be accomplished remotely? What tasks require staff to be on-site?*
- *When can tasks be completed? Can work hours be flexible?*
- *How will remote staff be supported? What equipment will need to be provided? How will employees without internet access, dedicated home office space, or other amenities be accommodated?*

Investigate legal obligations and best practices for remote work:

- *How will the organization remain compliant with federal, state, and local labor and nondiscrimination laws? How will accommodations be made for remote workers with disabilities?*
- *Has the organization considered other legal implications like zoning laws, tax implications, tort liability, insurance coverage, information security, and privacy?*

RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

(Re)Commit to equity

- *Tip: [Harvard Business Review](#) warns that remote work can enable avoidance of difficult conversations about race and offers tips on how to meaningfully incorporate equity into your organization's structure.*

Develop a remote work policy

- *Tip: Start from a [Telecommuting Policy Template](#). Use Venable's [Legal Pitfalls Presentation](#) to ensure policies comply with the organization's legal obligations.*

Ensure all staff are properly equipped for remote work

- *Tip: The Standards for Excellence [Guide to Remote Work](#) includes a home office checklist to get you started.*

Empower employees and managers with tools for successful remote work

- *Tip: [Gartner Research](#) has published their insights on how to support remote employees and managers*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Training for managers](#) providing an overview of remote work and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Provides a series of practical strategies designed especially for promoting inclusion in remote workplaces.
- [What 12,000 employees have to say about the future of remote work.](#) Respondents include analysts, engineers, HR personal, teachers, and health care professionals. Topics include flexibility, productivity, well-being, career security, social connectivity, culture, learning and development, and work tools.
- SHRM outlines [6 Ways to Foster Inclusion Among Remote Workers](#) in the workplace.
- [Recommendations to Drive Inclusive Excellence](#) from the National Inclusive Excellence Leadership Academy.

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LACK OF INTERACTION AND IMPACT ON PROGRAMMING

LACK OF INTERACTION AND IMPACT ON PROGRAMMING & DONOR RELATIONS

DEFINING THE ISSUE

COVID-19 has impacted billions of lives around the globe. Consequently, the role of the nonprofit sector has become paramount in combating the coronavirus and its impact on society's most vulnerable populations, especially in countries and regions where government services are struggling. However, nonprofit organizations have been facing serious challenges in reaching those most in need. The pandemic has impacted all aspects of nonprofit work – from operating programs, fundraising, allocations, coordinating staff, and continuing the engagement with partners and stakeholders situated across the globe.

DONOR RELATIONS

Donor outreach during the COVID-19 pandemic has been extremely challenging for fundraisers. The fear of contracting a highly contagious virus prohibits many health-conscious people from meeting together in person for extended periods of time. The creation of social distance guidelines dictates how people should interact: six feet of distance apart, face masks, no physical contact, and hand sanitizer available at all times.

Today's fundraisers are challenged to be flexible and creative in their stewardship efforts. Traditional fundraising methods are centered around establishing and building interpersonal relationships with financial donors, especially with those who possess higher capacities for giving. These relationships can be difficult to build in the virtual world, especially donors of an older generation who may not have the capability to adjust to virtual interactions. Not to mention, many donors are also dealing with restricted financial resources.

While nonprofit organizations have learned how to communicate with their constituents through the use of email, websites, newsletters, and social media, the experience of building relationships with donors in person is very distinctive. Without in-person events, donors have much less opportunity to see the positive effects of their contributions. Unless someone is an essential worker, meeting with anyone outside of one's household is deemed unnecessary, much less, safe for everyone.

Many organizations continue to push content online in hopes that virtual platforms would take the place of coffee dates and lunch meetings, where proposals and brainstorming around possible partnerships usually take place.

COVID-19, and any future crises, will force fundraisers to think outside of the box in order to bring in revenue and stay connected with their stakeholders.

SOLUTIONS

- Inform your donors of the organization's most urgent needs
- Only ask for funding that the organization needs at the moment
- Put in-person fundraising events on pause
- Understand that your donors may also be affected financially
- Now is the time to engage donors and volunteers to advocate for the organization
- Communicate with donors through phone calls, personal emails, and handwritten notes.
- Focus on using available digital analytics to inform strategic decisions.
- Send a video message from a beneficiary.
- Send a custom impact report.
- Reassess donor segmentation and review donor relations strategies according to personas.
- Remember to tell stories.
- Get creative with your online presence by adding resources, interactive activities, updates, and themed events.
- Invite them to a virtual or hybrid event (if local mandates allow in-person events).

VOLUNTEERS

CHALLENGES

- Safety Concerns
- Hosting Volunteer Events
- Virtual Volunteer Opportunities
- Attracting New Volunteers
- Legal Implications of Covid
- Remote Access to Computers and Online Activity

SOLUTIONS

- In order to safely mitigate any safety concerns prospective volunteers may have, it is important for organizations to follow the latest county and state health guidelines regarding COVID-19. It is also prudent to train staff and employees to educate volunteers on safe work practices while serving in a volunteer capacity.
- When hosting in-person volunteer events, a nonprofit organization should maintain strict adherence to county health regulations, as stated before. When possible, it would be wise to host events in an outdoor fashion. If an outdoors location is not accessible, organizations must do their best to retrofit their facilities to accommodate volunteers in light of the pandemic
- Another avenue that organizations must consider is the hosting of online or virtual volunteer events. Examples of virtual volunteer events can be a meet and greet with the nonprofit staff or its target client population. Nonprofits should understand that virtual opportunities are the only manner of event that offers no risk of COVID-19 transmission to any of the participating parties.
- When attempting to attract volunteers, nonprofit organizations must embrace online recruiting in light of the difficult conditions brought on by COVID-19. Especially important is the utilization of online advertisement. An alternative strategy that is another effective means of attracting volunteers is creating partnerships with other nonprofits. This can be done with other organizations serving the same client population, or with organizations designed to connect volunteers with opportunities.
- The last area of emphasis which nonprofit organizations must be aware of is the legal implications when holding an in-person volunteer event. It would be prudent to seek legal counsel when pursuing in-person volunteer events in order to create a release of liability documents protecting the nonprofit against the potential for COVID-19 related incidents.

NONPROFIT PARTNERSHIPS

PROBLEMS IN PARTNERSHIPS

The COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated the many needs of the public, and nonprofits are at the front lines trying to address their problems, but it's trying times like these where it becomes obvious that they can't do it alone.

Despite the extra challenges involved, partnerships are critical to a nonprofit's chance of survival during extreme uncertainty and depletion of resources. Partner organizations feel the heat, and they each have their own problems to deal with (even if that problem entails being able to respond to their partner's problems). Many partners have struggled with financial sustainability and strategic adaptation during the pandemic, and this has also affected their ability to perform in their partnerships. Many smaller nonprofits all contribute to making a big difference (when evaluating their combined impact on a charitable cause); still, they are unable to stay afloat due to their size.

Any of these issues can force nonprofits to resort to pivoting their missions and services due to pandemic limitations, which can cause a loss of identity, donors, and partner support. According to Stanford Social Innovation Review, a recent survey from LaPiana Consulting found that **93 percent of nonprofit respondents have already had to adapt or curtail services, directly affecting their partnerships.** Moreover, with nonprofits being forced to work remotely and meeting virtually (often via online platforms and zoom), the importance of trust and due diligence within a partnership is critical- especially when working quickly and efficiently in times of rapid change.

Although there are many obstacles to overcome during a global crisis, there is also great potential to enhance the long-term effectiveness of a nonprofit's response, strategic partnerships, and opportunities for partners to contribute to the sustainability of programs.

PARTNERSHIP SOLUTIONS

- Experiment with **rapid prototyping** approaches with partners, rather than launching major initiatives that require extensive analysis and proven track records.
- Don't let technology break down trust and due diligence. Invest in professional platforms to **maintain transparency and integrity with partners relying on working remotely**. Not only do sensitive, work-related files need to be safely stored/accessed remotely, but partners might also need access to corporate-level software systems from the comfort of their couch. Use this as an opportunity to increase trust and flexibility, since partners are wearing more hats and cross-training their employees to meet the needs of this crisis.
- Encourage partners to **collaborate on downstream distribution** to meet the basic needs of the public. For example, local nonprofits STEP, Women Warriors, and the ROSIE Network all worked together to accumulate their services and donations, warehouse them, and distribute these to their Navy veteran and junior listed constituents.
- **Reset partner expectations**, make new plans, and develop new performance targets. It is crucial to set and communicate clear goals, evaluate stakeholder effects and needs, and constantly assess and communicate progress with partners.
- **Promote the sharing of critical fractional resources**. For example, nonprofit partners can pool their money together to hire a shared fundraiser or PR specialist. It offers more options and security when nonprofit partners are able to combine their resources to address the mission, while also getting involved in basic needs that arise during a global crisis.
- Taking a page from the Toyota Handbook, larger, more secure nonprofits should **lean in and assist smaller partners** with operational difficulties that arise amid a crisis. In addition to being altruistic, it is also an investment. It is often less costly to assist/fix a current partner than to break in a new one.

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