Talent: The Missing Piece of Nonprofit Sustainability

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About Us

Your partner in nonprofit talent and culture management
Nonprofit Sustainability

What is it?
Nonprofit Sustainability: What is it?

Definition #1

“Nonprofit sustainability lies at the intersection of exceptional impact and financial viability.”

The Sustainability Mindset, Steve Zimmerman & Jeanne Bell
Nonprofit Sustainability: What is it?

Definition #2

“For charitable nonprofits, the phrase “sustainability” is commonly used to describe a nonprofit that is able to sustain itself over the long term, perpetuating its ability to fulfill its mission.”

Megan Coolidge, Community Wealth Partners
“Nonprofit sustainability occurs when a nonprofit attracts and effectively uses enough and the right kinds of money.”

Nell Edgington, Social Velocity
Nonprofit Sustainability +

“Nonprofit sustainability occurs when a nonprofit attracts and effectively uses enough and the right kinds of money and people necessary to lead and achieve their long-term outcome goals.”
Pillars of Nonprofit Sustainability

- Clear Mission
- Financial viability
- Long-term focus
- Exceptional Impact
Nonprofit Financial Sustainability

Financially sustainable nonprofits:

▪ Balance their reliance on external funding sources & streams with earned revenue
▪ Explore opportunities to build on programmatic success, such as scaling up high-demand programs;
▪ Leverage their brands to help promote their programs and services;
▪ Invest in financial and staff resources to improve existing programs and services;
▪ Are open to new partnerships that could bring the mission to life faster or more efficiently; and
▪ Demonstrate value and accountability to funders and key stakeholders

Adapted from: https://www.nonprofitrisk.org/resources/articles/financial-sustainability-the-new-frontier/
Alignment of Financial & Talent Sustainability

Financial Sustainability
- Strategic & Financial Planning
- Income Diversification
- Sound Administration & Finance
- Income Generation

Talent Sustainability
- Talent Management Planning
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Sound Talent Management Infrastructure
- Talent Development
The most impactful and sustainable nonprofit organizations are those that understand that organizational and talent sustainability are not either/or propositions but rather interdependent.
Talent Sustainability & Talent Management Models

What does your organization’s look like?
“An investment in talent is an investment in a nonprofit’s ability to achieve its mission and meet increasing societal needs.”

ProInspire
The Sector’s Talent Sustainability Conundrum

Source: https://philanthrofiles.org/2016/04/05/the-case-for-investing-in-nonprofit-talent/
Discussion Question:

What conversations is your organization having on talent sustainability and its impact on organizational and financial sustainability?
Why We Haven’t Achieved Talent Sustainability

We can’t sustain what we don’t invest in.

Source: Talent Philanthropy Project/Fund the People
We can’t sustain what we don’t invest in.

Which one is your organization?
Leadership is “talent oblivious”

Little to no resources are allocated for talent attraction, development or retention

Hiring, development and retention practices are often ineffective and absent of planning

Leadership is focused on programs, fundraising & finance; staff seen as incidental – often taken for granted
“Talent Aware” Model

• Leadership is “talent aware” but not intentional

• Allocation of resources for talent attraction, development and retention is seen as “nice to have” but not essential

• Hiring, development and retention investments are often inconsistent

• Talent management planning does not happen, or when it does, is not integrated with the strategic plan
“Talent Focused” Model

- Leadership is “talent focused”
- Allocation of resources for talent attraction, development and retention is intentional and seen as essential to organizational success
- Hiring, development and retention effectiveness are prioritized
- Talent management planning is integrated with the strategic plan
Discussion Question

How would greater investments in talent drive greater impact for your organization?
Key Steps to Talent Sustainability
Key Steps to Talent Sustainability

- Intentionality
- Strategy
- Integration
Step # 1 - Be Intentional

- Understand that talent is an asset to be managed, nurtured and invested in
- Recognize that your mission will be as impactful as the extent to which you prioritize talent
- Shed the view that talent sustainability is a nice to have
- Leverage your brand as an asset for attracting talent
Step # 2 - Be Strategic

- Require that your strategic plan has a talent management plan
- Allocate appropriate resources needed to achieve your talent management plan objectives
- Hold leadership accountable for programmatic, financial and talent outcomes
- Go beyond the basics of compliance, payroll & benefits administration
Step # 3 – Integrate Your Talent Plan with Your Strategic & Operating Plans

- Seek to understand the importance of talent effectiveness to organizational effectiveness
- Integrate people management goals with long-term organizational goals
- Integrate talent/HR leadership with senior management
- Integrate talent management with other measures of performance
Other Key Steps to Talent Sustainability

- Aligned leadership
- Be clear on the “who” not just the “what”
- Hire right. Hire well.
- Build & foster healthy workplace culture
- Invest in leadership and staff development consistently and proportionately
- Measure progress & impact with metrics
Q & A / Peer-to-Peer Learning
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