

# The Path Forward

## For New & Growing Non-Profit Organizations



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[www.VenturePhilanthropyGuide.org](http://www.VenturePhilanthropyGuide.org) This website explores a new approach to funding and building a nonprofit organization's capacity using practices common to building a business.

[www.socialfranchise.com](http://www.socialfranchise.com) Are you looking for a way to fund your organization and want to provide employment to some of your clients as well? This website is filled with case studies about non-profit owned franchises like Ben & Jerry's, Wendy's, 7-11, and Dunkin' Donuts.

[www.changemakers.net](http://www.changemakers.net) Join this community of social entrepreneurs to become engaged in open source collaboration to win grants of \$5,000 to pay for innovative solutions to serious social problems around the world. This online community will make your organization privy to the planning challenges and thinking strategies that are being funded. You can ask questions, suggest strategies, contribute expertise, and vote on the winner. If your organization has a program that wins, you get funded with the benefit of a cheering group of assistants who are watching the progress from the first idea on. What a great way to involve your donor-partners! Post your own challenges and let your donor-partners grapple with the ideas and lend their creativity to your planning process.

Every organization should have a copy of this new book by Noah J. Goldstein, Steve J. Martin, and Robert B. Cialdini: *Yes! 50 Scientifically Proven Ways to be Persuasive*, © 2008, Free Press, NY. Each chapter considers one question about the psychology of influence as it relates to business, marketing, and motivating people. The answer is always a case study that turns our instincts and common practices upside down. A big emphasis is given to the fact that people are motivated because of positive social proof. Instead of asking people to act because of a negative social message that tells how bad a problem is, flip the message around. Make people feel good about the action you want them to take. Help them to affiliate with a larger group of people who really are doing the right or the hoped for thing. The book is careful to stress the ethics that must be in play for these psychological principles to be used with integrity.

Want to know what I'm reading?  
Go to <http://readforwork.blogspot.com>.  
Feel free to add your comments there too.

What are you measuring? An elderly major donor to many faith-based organizations wondered aloud to me the other day, "these people are always needing more money and it seems that they never have much to show for all the years of work and investment. Why is that?" he asked. His concern is for there to be a tangible return on his investment. It isn't that he regrets giving to the organizations or that he will discontinue his involvement with them either. The key question that this man needs to have answered is on the mind of every donor especially when there is so much competition for gifts at the same time that there is a squeeze on how far money goes these days. Donors need to understand exactly what their money is buying. It means you have to decide what you should measure and how to quantify it. Once you can associate metrics with what you are asking your donors to support then you can also set goals by which you can assess the growth of your organization. Without the metrics you run the risk of being unable to grow. People won't be able to share effectively what you do with others. People won't be convinced that you will be wise with their contributions.

10 Tests of a Plan's Efficacy & Promise: Many plans fail because a few simple to ask and challenging to answer questions don't get discussed first. Here are ten must-asks for boards before they sign off on new programs and strategic plans.

1. Is the plan consistent with the organization's mission and purpose? If not, the plan may prove to be a distraction that takes you away from your core values even if it brings some income.
2. Is the plan doable in the time proposed given the available staff and budgetary constraints? Nothing hurts your reputation as far as your donors are concerned as much as failing to do what you promise even if you can point to all kinds of reasons for the missed deadlines.
3. Does the plan produce a measurable improvement or other return on investment? If you can't measure it, you can't be sure that you're actually doing it. Figure out how to measure every plan and strategy.
4. How will it be good for your stakeholders and do they really believe it? Stakeholders include your board members, staff, clients, donors, volunteers, and the wider watching community.
5. Does it increase your revenues or can it pay for itself through income, designated gifts, or new grants?
6. Does it positively address or solve a significant or strategic problem?
7. Are the staff, board, and your donors enthusiastically behind the plan? Without enthusiasm you may have to work hard to keep the key players motivated as the initial push turns into routine work.
8. Have you done your due diligence? This may involve some marketing research or comparisons with other similar organizations and programs to evaluate whether you have a identified realistic approach for your proposal.
9. Who does not think this will work and what do they suspect may be wrong with the plan? Inviting dissent before committing to a plan will only strengthen the end result, and if there is a flaw in the plan it is wisdom to ferret it out before you begin.
10. What could go wrong and how will you proceed if it does go wrong? Invite all the stakeholders to weigh in on this question because it will give you a good idea about the contingencies that may be hidden deal breakers.

Check out [www.grantmapper.com](http://www.grantmapper.com). I am presenting the next series of telewebseminars for K-12 classroom teachers on the grant-seeking process beginning with a free one hour overview to be held Monday November 3 at 9PM Eastern Time, 8PM Central Time, and 6PM Pacific Time. Everyone who needs to know about how to find, apply for, and receive grant funding can sign up for and attend this free seminar because the procedures and protocols are the same for every grant-seeker. It leads to a longer hands-on workshop in four series which takes participants through the process.



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