

Talking Points for October 22, 2014 NJWOW Symposium

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Overview

Non-profits exist to further the public good. But just like for-profits, they need to be well run, effective and sustainable in order to be successful. Non-profit doesn't mean "can't make a profit." It means that profits – SURPLUSES – have to be funneled back into the exempt purpose.

MANY of the attributes of a successful business are similar to the attributes of a successful non-profit. But there are important differences.

Thinking of Forming a Non-Profit?

FIRST - focus your thoughts/create a business plan

- You are potentially competing for attention, funding, etc., with approx. 29,000 501(c)(3) organizations in New Jersey. Think carefully about whether a new non-profit is really needed.
- Visit www.njnonprofits.org for more resources, including our FREE "Thinking of Forming a Non-Profit?" booklet, readiness questionnaire, links to other state and resources, and a special note of caution about the new IRS Form 1023 EZ

Alternatives to Forming a New Organization

- Join an existing effort
- Create a special program of an existing effort
- Start a local chapter of a national or regional organization
- Maintain an informal organization
- Find a fiscal sponsor
- Be a for-profit / sole proprietorship

Non-Profits as a Career Path

- Non-profit work is challenging, but very rewarding / fulfilling.
- Keep in mind that the non-profit is DIVERSE. Just like you wouldn't say, "I want to work for a for-profit business," the same holds true for non-profits. Try to focus your thinking.
- Get a sense of where your passion lies. (Health care? Animals? Environmental Protection? Advocacy? Education? Youth Development?)
- Small org? Large org? As with any employer, a small vs. large shop makes a difference.

Not connected yet?

- **Network** – go to NP events, workshops, conferences. The Young Nonprofit Professionals holds networking events throughout the state. The Center for Non-Profits posts a wide variety of NJ non-profit events on its website (www.njnonprofits.org/Events.html).
- **Volunteer**. Offer pro bono help with a project. Consider volunteering in some capacity, or perhaps

www.njnonprofits.org

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[facebook.com/njnonprofits](https://www.facebook.com/njnonprofits) | twitter.com/nj_nonprofits | [linkedin.com/company/center-for-non-profits](https://www.linkedin.com/company/center-for-non-profits)

Center for Non-Profits is a New Jersey non-profit corporation and a federally recognized 501(c)(3) publicly supported charity.

joining a committee or even serving on a charity board (board service is an important commitment, so be sure you understand the responsibilities involved). Your personal involvement will help you gain new insights into an organization and strengthen your relationship with it.

- If in school, seek out internships.
- **Donate** if your resources permit.
- **Find ways to connect and make yourself known.**

Opportunities for Advancing Current Nonprofit Organizations

Elements of High Performing Organizations* – *These are all INTERCONNECTED*

- Mission, Vision and Strategy
- Governance and Leadership
- Program Delivery and Impact
- Resource Development
- Strategic Relationships/Outreach
- Internal Operations and Management

**Source: TCC Group*

The areas that tend to get shortest shrift: visibility / marketing / communications, evaluation (documenting impact), and advocacy/systems change.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE IMPACT! -- Being able to document, demonstrate and articulate the impact of your organization. You need to do this to show your relevance AND to make adjustments and plan appropriately.

- **OWN YOUR COSTS.** Be sure to budget accurately, including the full costs of doing the work.
- **Invest in infrastructure.** Skimping on essentials such as technology, staff salaries, professional development, communications, planning, etc., will HARM your organization in the long run and do a disservice to your mission.
- **INSIST ON FULL FUNDING TO SUPPORT THE ORGANIZATION'S WORK. An organization that continuously works on insufficient funding is unsustainable.** Engage in an honest dialogue about these issues to your funders (public and private), donors, board and other stakeholders.

You are not alone!

- Tap into available resources for technical assistance
 - Management support organizations, membership groups, funders, Web-based resources, United Way, Center for Non-Profits, etc.
- Attend workshops, networking events to enhance knowledge, make new contacts
- Form affinity groups to share ideas, vent frustrations

Additional list of resources/websites provided separately