

Six Practices of Highly Effective Nonprofits

1. Advocate and serve. High-impact organizations don't just focus on doing one thing well. They may start out providing great programs, but eventually they realize that they cannot achieve systemic change through service delivery alone. So they add policy advocacy to access government resources or to change legislation, thus expanding their impact. Other nonprofits start out doing advocacy and later add grassroots programs to supercharge their strategy. Ultimately, **all of them bridge the divide between service and advocacy**, and become good at doing both.

2. Make markets work. Tapping into the power of self-interest and the laws of economics is far more effective than appealing to pure altruism. No longer content to rely on traditional notions of charity or to see the private sector as the enemy, **great nonprofits find ways to work with markets and help business "do well while doing good."** They influence business practices, build corporate partnerships, and develop earned-income ventures -- all ways of leveraging market forces to achieve social change on a grander scale.

3. Inspire evangelists. Great nonprofits see volunteers as much more than a source of free labor or membership dues. **They create meaningful ways to engage individuals in emotional experiences that help them connect to the group's mission and core values.** They see volunteers, donors, and advisers not only for what they can contribute to the organization in terms of time, money, and guidance but also for what they can do as evangelists for their cause. They build and sustain strong communities to help them achieve their larger goals.

4. Nurture nonprofit networks. Although most groups pay lip service to collaboration, many of them really see other nonprofits as competition for scarce resources. But **high-impact organizations help the competition succeed, building networks of nonprofit allies and devoting remarkable time and energy to advancing their larger field.** They freely share wealth, expertise, talent, and power with their peers, not because they are saints, but because it's in their self-interest to do so.

5. Master the art of adaptation. All the organizations in this book are **exceptionally adaptive, modifying their tactics as needed to increase their success.** They have responded to changing circumstances with one innovation after another. Along the way, they've made mistakes, and have even produced some flops. But unlike many nonprofits, they have also mastered the ability to listen, learn, and modify their approach based on external cues -- allowing them to sustain their impact and stay relevant.

6. Share leadership. We witnessed much charisma among the leaders in this book, but that doesn't mean they have oversize egos. These CEOs are exceptionally strategic and gifted entrepreneurs, but they also know they must share power in order to be a stronger force for good. They **distribute leadership throughout their organization and their nonprofit network -- empowering others to lead.** And they cultivate a strong second-in-command, build enduring executive teams with long tenure, and develop highly engaged boards in order to have more impact.

Forces for Good: The Six Practices of High-Impact Nonprofits; Leslie R. Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant; Copyright © 2008 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All Rights Reserved. For a more complete article outlining findings of the book, please see *Creating High Impact Nonprofits*, Stanford Social Innovation Review available at: www.interSectorL3C.com/articles.html