

Strategy Matters™

ANTHONY KNERR & ASSOCIATES

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Established in 1990, ANTHONY KNERR & ASSOCIATES assists leading nonprofit institutions in the United States and Europe in successfully solving complex strategic issues.

Why Strategy Matters

Every nonprofit organization faces at least one central strategic issue vital to its continued well-being and effectiveness. Whether large or small, wealthy or poor, old or young, complex or simple, there is typically a fundamental strategic concern—or concerns—on which the future of the organization depends.

The strategic issue confronting an organization will vary, depending upon its particular purpose, circumstances, history and leadership. It may, for example, be one of the following: Should we grow, can we afford to grow, can we afford not to grow? What should we make of emerging competitors? How can we reverse a decline in our audiences? How do we deal with too many applicants, visitors, patients or regulators? Why can't anyone accurately articulate our mission? Is our mission, as currently stated, still relevant? How will the disruptive nature of information technology transform our business model? How can we become more visible? What do we want to be when we grow up?

An organization is significantly handicapped without clear answers to questions like these—particularly in a world that is changing so rapidly and in such unforeseeable ways—for it otherwise runs the risk of blindly responding to opportunities or challenges, failing to transform itself, and becoming troubled or, worse, irrelevant.

Rigorous and continuous strategic thinking offers the best shot for an organization to recognize clearly who it is, where it is and where it wants to go and thereby increase the odds that it will constructively determine its future. And when an organization's ambitions are clearly and concisely expressed, its leaders and managers gain guidance about how to evaluate and solve particular issues.

What Strategic Thinking Is All About

At its simplest level, strategic thinking is continuing, thoughtful attention by its leadership to the longer-term future of an organization. It is a mindset, an active alertness to the circumstances and possibilities of an organization and how that organization can best move forward. By continuously scanning the horizon, taking account of emerging trends and new ideas and seeing how other organizations are dealing

with similar matters, an organization's leadership is better prepared to make informed decisions about future directions and then act upon them.

The best strategic thinking focuses on a big, audacious, long-term goal and sustains a long-term commitment to realize it. By looking ahead rather than behind and focusing on opportunities and possibilities rather than being overwhelmed or discouraged by current constraints or limitations, an organization has the best odds of successfully thriving in today's complex environment. New York University decided in the 1970s that it wished to become the equal of an Ivy League institution, then an unimaginatively bold aspiration—and look at it now. This clear strategic aspiration linked the work of many leaders, across time and divisions, making growth not solely dependent on any particular individual. Similarly, Columbia and Harvard are planning extensive expansions of their campuses that will require decades and billions to realize—but are necessary for them to thrive in the years ahead.

The best strategic thinking also recognizes the old saw that “nothing succeeds like success” and incorporates integrated approaches to create—and maintain—a sense of active forward momentum. Because nonprofit organizations are immensely complex organisms and need to be highly and carefully managed, significant thought and attention must be given—day in and day out—to making certain that each program and each activity bespeaks, at least incipiently, the longer-term goal.

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By thinking continuously about opportunities, vulnerabilities, changes in the environment and the like, strategically oriented institutions can adapt more thoughtfully to changing circumstances, make better tactical decisions and achieve greater levels of sustained performance.

Benefits of a Disciplined and Well-Articulated Strategic Perspective

There are a number of reasons why continuous and informed strategic thinking can be beneficial to an organization:

- Everyone connected with an organization wants to know what its mission is, where it's going, how it can be more effective. A robust strategy provides the ideas and the words to build commitment, strengthen morale, improve communications and gain supporters—and, fundamentally, build organizational confidence.
- Good strategic thinking can help an organization dispel myths it may have about itself and allow it to confront, directly and honestly, what it does well and where it is not up to speed; what its true strengths are and where it needs improvement.
- Most organizations have unrealized potential in both people and context: leaders, staff and volunteers are energized by bold organizational ambitions and will stretch to help gain them; reframing of mission or vision often excites the world-weary board member or discouraged executive; looking analytically at key trends, evolving competition and new opportunities helps unlock unseen institutional possibilities and generate new organizational energy.
- Patterns of competition—and the intensity of competition—are increasing rapidly in the new “flat” world created by the Internet and globalization. While no institution is safe from a competitor down the block or on the other side of the world—particularly as the cost of communications continues to fall, unmet needs for service increase and ambitions for organizational success grow—vigorous strategic thinking permits institutions to understand the character and nature of their competition and deal with it proactively and effectively.
- Successful fundraising depends upon clear strategy. Those organizations that have gone through the difficult work of thinking through their mission, aspirations and objectives have the best shot at raising significant philanthropic resources. Those institutions that have not done so lack a compelling rationale to discuss with prospective donors, may raise money for the wrong purposes and are likely to underachieve their financial targets, possibly significantly so.

- Successful branding also depends on clear strategy. Branding involves developing and consistently communicating a clear vision of the organization's aspirational identity. Branding helps an institution move toward its own envisioned future by establishing and maintaining a clear identity, a process that is more likely to be successful when built on a foundation of a clear and vigorous organizational strategy.

Successful fundraising depends upon clear strategy.

- Being clear about strategic directions allows every executive, every staff member and every volunteer to decide whether a meeting, telephone call or e-mail helps him or her—and the entire organization—move towards the agreed-upon goals or is a waste of time, energy and resources.

Where Strategic Planning Fits In

From time to time, an organization may make a concentrated effort to summarize its strategic thinking and undertake strategic planning, which will typically involve individuals throughout an organization who are formally charged with thinking systematically about its direction over the following five to ten years. The purpose of strategic planning is to chart a multi-year road map—a strategic plan—that will provide a framework for action, but not a detailed blueprint. But process is as important as the resultant planning document—without the right process, the document will be useless.



“Then it's agreed: as of this afternoon, we change our status as a non-profit corporation to an aggressively for profit corporation.”

Strategic planning is time-consuming and demanding for executive leadership, staff and volunteers, and there are better and worse times to undertake it. A strategic planning process is not likely to benefit organizations whose *raison d'être* is in doubt, organizations in financial crisis or organizations without stable governance or executive leadership. But it is likely to benefit organizations that are stable, but face difficult and complex choices of future direction in the context of a rapidly and continuously changing environment.

Critical Ingredients of Successful Strategic Planning

The experience of Anthony Knerr & Associates suggests there are several critical ingredients for making strategic planning work:

- The planning process should be tailored to the culture, dynamics and personality of the organization—there is no effective “one size fits all” way of doing it. It is crucial to ensure that the process is appropriate for the organization, engages the right people in the right ways at the right time and has all of the participants pleased and excited with both the process and the strategic plan at the end of the process. A process that works for the American Red Cross is not likely to be effective for Swarthmore College. Thus, for example, a planning process we helped design for a leading liberal arts college began with establishing the deep involvement of the board, whose members would fund the plan. By contrast, a strategic communications plan we devised for another institution was created with extensive faculty input, not only because their input helped strengthen the messages, but also because the faculty would decide whether the themes and messages were credible.
- Strategic planning needs to focus on the most important issues and opportunities. At any point in time, organizations face more strategic issues than they can usefully analyze and resolve. If strategic planning attempts to be comprehensive and address all of the strategic issues, it is likely that nothing will be accomplished. The strategic planning agenda should include—or aim to identify—a relatively small number of highly important issues that need to be resolved. One organization may need to focus on rethinking its mission and realigning its program focus whereas another may be fine with its mission and programming but confront sig-

nificant issues about its governance and fundraising. For an international service organization that effectively operated as a franchise with a central headquarters, our analysis disclosed that the key challenge of sustaining and increasing membership depended on solving two other issues: developing a consistent international positioning, and revising standards for chapter activities that balanced flexibility with the need for alignment with international goals. The power of strategy is that it signals choices about both what to do and what *not* to do.

- The planning process should be designed to permit sufficient opportunity for rigorous analysis that lays out “the facts of the case.” The process should be structured to ensure that the right questions are squarely on the table, analyzed in an appropriately tough-minded way and discussed collegially and openly. But because key insights often arrive serendipitously, it should *also* include appropriate time for reflection about key ideas, issues and objectives. The strategic planning process for one college was suddenly “unlocked” when it began to imagine where it wanted to be in 20 years rather than five—there was instantaneously a cascade of bold and exciting new ideas on the table.
- While the planning process should be focused and rigorous, it should also be informed by a sense of fun and lots of good humor. Strategic thinking is hard enough without its being dreary, overly serious or just dull. Building in a cocktail hour or a non-working lunch provides more than liquid or solid refreshment—it creates bonds of trust that make it easier for people to venture insights, propose different ideas and, importantly, tolerate disagreements about goals and strategies.

The planning process should be tailored to the culture, dynamics and personality of the organization.

- The document coming out of the strategic planning process—the strategic plan—should be concise, crisp and “big-picture.” It should include the organization’s mission and vision; delineate four to five key strategic objectives, with underlying goals for each objective; lay out means of measuring progress towards the realization of the objectives and goals; and provide an implementation plan and, often, a financial plan in an appendix. Moreover, it should do so in as few pages as possible.

■ Strategic planning needs to be action-oriented to be effective—there should be a seamless process linking planning and implementation, a consideration that has a major impact on who should be involved in each stage of the planning process. A strategic plan that is too comprehensive and not linked to action usually ends up as a “book on the shelf.” As the Chinese general Sun-Tzu observed 2,500 years ago, “Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.”

Barriers to the Successful Formulation of Strategy

Successful strategy sometimes seems—and is—extremely difficult to achieve, for a number of reasons:

- Strategy is inherently messy, time consuming and threatening. It is not easy to figure out—and agree upon—an organization’s future, let alone what the organization, in fact, is. Strategy means wrestling to the ground the most profound issues that any organization faces, reconciling differing perspectives about these issues and, often, overcoming deep-seated anxieties about whether the organization has the ability to change course and (re)adapt itself.
- The press of the ongoing responsibilities is often so demanding that it seems impossible to find the time to think—or act—strategically. Sometimes it just feels easier to simply show up every day, hoping that somehow things will work out for the best.
- Bringing together different constituents can seem daunting, particularly if internal communications are not superb. Key players often have different organizational (and personal) ambitions, anxieties or tolerance for risk. Talking candidly about the most essential elements of an organization can reveal radically different perspectives, which then need to be dealt with constructively and thoughtfully.
- It sometimes seems risky to make key strategic decisions, for in doing so the organization is publicly putting a major stake in the ground

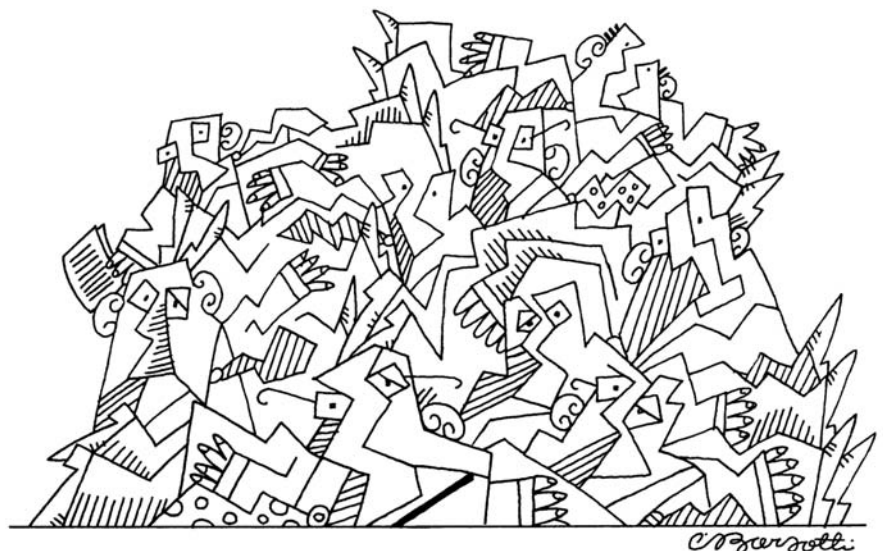
about direction, intention and outcomes with no guarantee of success. But not reaching a bold aspiration is surely better than making only marginal improvements and letting the world define the organization’s future by default.

Strategy is inherently messy, time consuming and threatening.

- Reaching agreement on the exact words to express strategic goals—let alone an organization’s mission and vision—is never easy, and it must be a shared exercise to be successful. Not only does everyone around the table seemingly fancy themselves an excellent writer, skilled editor or superb word-smith, it is not easy to craft accurate, cogent and compelling statements of purpose and aspiration.
- Linking execution with strategy on an ongoing basis—by tying the day-to-day and month-to-month activities of all constituents to agreed upon strategic goals and objectives—is complex and requires persistence, patience and tough choices.

How Nonprofit Strategic Planning Differs from Corporate Sector Planning

Strategic planning in the nonprofit sector differs significantly from that in the private sector in focus, purpose and design. Nonprofit organizations are, by definition, mission-driven, and so central to every



“Wentworth, could I take another look at that reorganization plan?”

nonprofit is its mission statement, the encapsulation of what it seeks to accomplish, whom it serves and how it does so. Every aspect of a nonprofit's strategic planning flows from its mission statement—though oftentimes the mission statement needs to be revisited, refined or rewritten in the course of completing a strategic plan.

Every aspect of a nonprofit's strategic planning flows from its mission statement.

Though every business firm must be clear about what business it is, statements of mission are not central to them—whereas the “bottom line” is, of course. Thus, a firm's strategic plan is typically driven from the top down, relatively short-term in orientation and focused on achieving certain clear financial objectives—market-share, revenues, profitability and return to shareholders, for instance. It may (or may not) actively involve many individuals within the firm, but rarely anyone from outside; it will be more concerned with numbers than ideas; and it will be typically updated (or thrown out) within six months to a year. It is usually more of a business plan than a strategic plan—though the wise and profitable firm is continuously thinking strategically and long-term.

Successful business people who sit on nonprofit boards sometimes have difficulty understanding why nonprofit strategy is inherently more participatory, long-winded and complex than what they are used to in their day jobs. It's a different process, serving different purposes and having different outcomes.

The Punch Line

The wise nonprofit thinks strategically, understanding that the realization of its mission is dependent upon a longer view that is periodically reassessed and reset, informed by a set of clear three- to five-year goals and objectives and embodied in a formal plan that serves as a road-map for everything the organization is doing.

It uses its strategic plan as a key tool to measure organizational performance, undergird development planning and management, inform external and internal communications and branding and, in general, serve as the “operational charter” for guiding the organization.

Further, it sees strategic thinking as critical to successful fundraising—for it realizes that major donors are interested in knowing about an organization's aspirations, take comfort in a track record of successful realization of prior strategic plans and typically concern themselves with a longer-term investment horizon.

Key Indicators of the Strategy-Focused Organization

- Everyone—board, staff and volunteers—understands the organization's mission, key objectives and core values and can articulate them accurately and succinctly in their own words.
- The organization thinks—and acts—boldly on the basis of a clear organizational strategy. It shapes its future through clear analysis, participatory decision-making and forceful intentions, rather than simply responding to emerging challenges or sudden opportunities.
- The organization's leadership spends significant and regular time on strategic issues. The board regularly discusses some aspect of the organization's longer-term aspirations, possibilities and constraints and reviews progress towards the realization of longer-term strategic perspectives. The chief executive officer and the senior executive team spend between 15% and 20% of their time, on average over the course of a month or year, on strategic matters.
- The organization updates and refreshes its strategic plan on a regular basis—no less frequently than every five years—and in doing so takes analytic account of its successes and failures since the previous plan, notes changes (both positive and threatening) in its situation and context and delineates a new set of strategic goals and objectives for the next period of time.
- All key constituents participate in strategic planning, through a process guided by the leadership of the board and the chief executive officer. Building involvement increases the likelihood of owner-

ship of the resulting strategic plan and hence boosts the odds of successful implementation of the plan.

- The organization has an implementation plan linked to its strategic plan that details the specific steps over a one or two year period to realize the key goals of the strategic plan. The implementation plan delineates specific tasks with responsible parties and anticipated completion dates for each strategic goal; includes an analytically secure financial plan; and provides clear metrics to measure the performance of board and staff.

- The organization shares its strategic thinking and planning with its donors and prospective funders so that they understand its mission, values, aspirations and key strategic drivers. It uses its strategic thinking to develop long-term partnerships with volunteers and funders and encourage investment by them in the achievement of its strategic objectives. It regularly reports on how philanthropic financial support is enabling it to meet its goals and objectives and ensures full accountability and transparency with respect to all aspects of its planning and management.

Notable Books

In each issue, we identify and briefly describe a small number of books that are insightful about consequential matters and offer new ways of thinking strategically about the nonprofit world.

■ *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*

Thomas L. Friedman

Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006, 488 + vii pp, \$27.50

Thomas Friedman's analysis of the twenty-first century is a best-seller for good reason: it is a remarkably clear-headed and accessible overview of the impact of the confusing and complex array of recent events, trends and circumstances and what they mean for individuals, organizations and countries. The book is a handy, but reliable and insightful, guide to what Friedman deftly characterizes as the "flattening" of the globe.

A *New York Times* Pulitzer-prize winning reporter and author, Friedman starts out by identifying "ten forces that flattened the world", a convenient but sobering overview of the extraordinary confluence of events and innovations within the short span of almost two decades: the fall of the Berlin Wall and Windows going up in November 1989; Netscape going public in August 1995; the introduction of work flow software in the mid-1990s; the rise of self-organizing collaborative communities also in the mid-1990s; Y2K and outsourcing to India; China joining the World Trade Organization in December 2001 which gave a significant boost to "off-shoring"; the rise of the supply-chain at such companies as Wal-Mart; "in-sourcing", a new form of collaboration

and creating value horizontally in which UPS, among others, provides services for other corporations under their name; the emergence of Google and ever increasingly powerful Web-based search capacities; and the arrival of digital wireless mobile devices (or "the steroids" as Friedman calls them). Whew!

It's hard to remember the sequencing of these forces, let alone how quickly they emerged or to fathom the exponential power of their interrelatedness. But it is not Friedman's aim to provide a definitive history or theory of global change. Rather, his strength is providing a fast-paced review of our extraordinary recent history through his signature style of interesting anecdotes, zippy language and succinct interpretation.

Friedman goes on to suggest that a "triple convergence" of factors adds up to a perfect storm of revolutionary economic change. The first is the "creation of a global, Web-enabled playing field that allows for multiple forms of collaboration...in real time, without regard to geography, distance or, in the near future, even language." The second is the emergence of new forms of business and cooperation that utilize the platform created by the Web that are less about command and control and more about connecting and collaborating horizontally. The third is the entry of 3 billion new people into the new, more horizontal playing field, primarily from China, India and other societies that had been only marginal participants in the earlier world economic system.

As a result of this triple convergence, Friedman argues that "global collaboration and competition—

between individuals and individuals, companies and individuals, companies and companies and companies and customers—have been made cheaper, easier, more friction-free and more productive for more people from more corners of the earth than at any time in the history of the world—a view that is perhaps hyperbolic, but undoubtedly accurate.

Nonprofits must be alert and open to the increasingly inclusive, frictionless and transparent world ever more available to everyone around the globe.

The impact of “the flattening world” on nonprofits has been and will continue to be profound, even though many nonprofits have yet to be aware of the full measure of transformation that is happening under their noses. It’s not sufficient for a nonprofit to merely have a good website—that’s far too passive. It’s not sufficient to have a strong information systems platform—that’s simply the platform. It’s not sufficient to Google—that’s just a convenient way to retrieve and sort increasing masses of available information. Like corporations (and governments), nonprofits need to “glocalize”, maintaining local presence and focus while understanding and incorporating a global perspective. They must be alert and open to the increasingly inclusive, frictionless and transparent world that is ever more available to everyone around the globe. And they must actively, and enthusiastically, play a part in that world even though it will probably mean they must reinvent themselves to do so.

“To listen to some of the critics, though, you would think that globalization was only about the spread of crass capitalism, global brands, fast food, and consumer values all crowding out warm, cozy, thriving local communities, industries, and cultures.... But globalization is not simply about the spread of capitalism of markets or enhanced trade. It is not an exclusively economic phenomenon and its impact is not exclusively economic. It is a much broader, deeper, and more complex phenomenon, involving new forms of communication and innovation. The flattening of the world is about the creation of a global platform for multiple

forms of sharing work, knowledge, and entertainment. Worrying about the pulverizing effects of globalization is very legitimate, indeed very important, but ignoring its ability also to empower individuals and enrich our cultural cornucopia misses its potentially positive effects on human freedom and diversity... The iron law of globalization is very simple: If you think it is all good, or you think it is all bad, you don’t get it. Globalization has empowering and disempowering, homogenizing and particularizing, democratizing and authoritarian tendencies all built into it. It is about the global market, but it is also about the Internet and Google.”

— Thomas L. Friedman, *The World Is Flat*

■ Andrew Carnegie

David Nasaw

The Penguin Press, 2006, 878+xiv pp, \$35.00

Having built America’s greatest fortune on iron, steel and muscle, Andrew Carnegie retired from active involvement in business in 1901 to begin a second career as the first modern philanthropist. As engagingly chronicled in David Nasaw’s new biography, the “Star-Spangled Scotsman’s” achievements as a philanthropist remain astonishing a century later: he founded the predecessor of a major university, Carnegie-Mellon; endowed the Carnegie Institution; funded museums and concert halls; created pension systems for teachers that evolved into TIAA-CREF; provided scholarships for the poor; most famously, provided funds to build nearly 3,000 free libraries worldwide; and funded more than two dozen major American think tanks, foundations and other institutions, all of which continue to confer significant benefits on society.

It is instructive in this current Age of Riches to study the father of modern philanthropy, who made his riches in the Gilded Age.

Born of modest means, Carnegie emigrated from Scotland to western Pennsylvania in 1848 at the age of 13 and with precocious speed became well connected and well positioned, eventually controlling a major portion of the US steel business and becoming the wealthiest individual in America. Carnegie moved to New York City in 1901 and laid out his essential principles of business and philanthropy in *The Gospel of Wealth* that “he who dies rich dies



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“By God, gentlemen, I believe we’ve found it—the Fountain of Funding.”

thus disgraced.” He was to retain this remarkably consistent vision for his remaining 29 years and urged the rich to give away their wealth during their lifetimes and in doing so to apply the same entrepreneurial skills and focus that they used in its accumulation. Devoting the remainder of his life to giving away his fortune, he quickly realized the necessity of systematizing what he came to call “industrial philanthropy.”

His highly organized office staff not only distributed the funds (in periodic, not lump-sum payments), but also performed research and oversaw the creation of hundreds of boards and advisory panels. With enormous funds at hand, Carnegie never ran out of money and was, at times, frustrated in his inability to give it all away. As a businessman, Carnegie had bedeviled his excellent managers with orders and suggestions, but as a philanthropist, he proved to be quite different: once he had provided money and ensured responsible leadership for institutions, he largely stayed out of their affairs.

A professor of history at City University of New York, Nasaw draws a portrait of a man who loved his adopted country, was acutely aware of how to

thrive within its financial, political and social precincts, but preferred action to deliberation—and had a cultural, educational and social impact still felt today. Carnegie’s philanthropic techniques became the template for generations of modern grant-making—as did his interest and attention to self-promotion.

Foundations can make their greatest contribution as a driver of change—not as a catalyst or funder.

Yet the terrible irony of Carnegie was his unceasing ambition to become even wealthier so that he could give away ever larger amounts of money. Taking advantage of business practices that are not available today—or even considered appropriate—he was ruthless in accumulating wealth by justifying the good he could do in distributing it. While today’s wealthy are not nearly as rapacious as Carnegie and his fellow Gilded Age moguls, there is the continuing irony of how today’s global economy is generating unparalleled levels of wealth,

much of which is seeking new forms and types of philanthropic outlets to meet pressing social needs, while simultaneously creating a startlingly wide divergence between the extremely wealthy and everyone else.

■ **The Foundation: A Great American Secret**

Joel L. Fleishman

PublicAffairs, 2007, 357 + xxiv pp, \$27.95

Warren Buffet's recent announcement that he would donate the bulk of his assets, some \$31 billion, to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation captured public attention not only about the size of the resultant wealthiest foundation in the world, but also about his lack of interest in memorializing his generosity in perpetuity. Joel Fleishman's book identifies and explores many of the issues raised by Buffet's remarkable decision to "outsource" his philanthropy and, as such, is the most important current analysis of a poorly understood, but highly influential, sector of today's society—America's 68,000 foundations—and one central to the leadership and impact of the nonprofit sector overall.

Fleishman is in a unique role to comment knowledgeably, but critically, about U.S. foundations. Formerly President of Atlantic Philanthropic Service Company, the U.S. program staff of Atlantic Philanthropies, and before then responsible for Duke University's 1980s capital campaign, he now heads a foundation research center at Duke. Beyond his deep familiarity and respect for the field, he draws upon over 100 case studies and numerous interviews to lay out compelling evidence of the beneficial impacts of foundations, of which he argues there are many, as well as point out important shortcomings.

On the former, he discusses the three roles that foundations play—that of driver, partner and catalyst. He argues that it is in the active and directive role of driver, rather than the more passive role of catalyst or funder, that foundations can make their greatest contribution. He suggests, quite rightly, that foundations are "the operational secret" of the nonprofit (or "civic") sector, providing the primary source of start-up capital for new nonprofit organizations, nurturing them into self-sustainability and providing a continuing supply of social venture capital. He gives an overview of the breadth of American foundations, a brief history of foundation approaches and styles and twelve superb case studies (drawn from his larger pool of 100) of high-impact foundation initiatives, ranging from the transformation of American

medical education by the Flexner Report to the green revolution to Sesame Street to a sustainable energy program in China.

On the latter, Fleishman observes that "many of today's foundations operate with an insulated culture that tolerates an inappropriate level of secrecy and even arrogance in their treatment of grant-seekers, grant-receivers, the wider civic sector and the public officials charged with oversight. This needs to change." After summarizing the ways in which he believes foundations go awry, he suggests a trenchant set of ways for foundations to increase the impact of their funding—primarily to be more transparent and accountable in their decision-making processes and results (both positive and negative), more strategic in deploying their resources and better-focused on problems ripe for solution.

If such voluntary efforts on the part of foundations to improve transparency and accountability are not taken up within a reasonable period of time, he suggests governmental action that would impose legal requirements to create a culture of transparency among foundations—tough-minded counsel that is surely both reasonable and appropriate in view of the growing number and increasing assets of American foundations.

As a final note, Fleishman offers three major trends in philanthropy in the 21st century: America's charitable giving will increase greatly; new forms and strategies for philanthropy will evolve in shapes and forms which cannot yet be fathomed; and venture philanthropy and social entrepreneurship will gradually come to dominate philanthropy in this century.

Any leader who hopes to make a major foundation his or her partner would do well to understand Fleishman's underscoring the heightened expectations of these institutions for their own performance, and, consequently, for their grantees. Because foundations are being propelled both by external demands for greater accountability and internal pressure for increased effectiveness, those expectations are unlikely to diminish.

■ **101 Mission Statements from Top Companies**

Jeffrey Abrahams

Ten Speed Press, 2007, 147+v pp., \$14.95

This succinct book tackles a big subject and amply demonstrates why it is so difficult to get mission statements right. In a brief opening section, Abrahams explains the purpose and intent of mission statements,

Nonprofit organizations will quickly see how difficult it is to capture succinctly and compellingly their essential purpose and values in a simple statement.

as well as his recommended process for creating one. The heart of the book are 101 corporate mission statements of every conceivable type, from pseudo-historical epics (Ingersoll-Rand stressing the courage of its founders in leaving the buggy-whip industry) to pithy statements of governing values (Amgen summing up its mission as “to serve

patients”) to the highly aspirational (Dreyer’s Grand Ice Cream Holdings seeks “to become the pre-eminent ice cream company in the United States”).

Abraham’s examples demonstrate how difficult the corporate sector finds it to craft clear, well-phrased and relevant mission statements. Most of Abraham’s examples are light on content but high on hopes, or as he puts it elsewhere in his volume, “writing can be hard work.” Nonprofit organizations, which by definition are mission-driven, will quickly see from his book how difficult, but vital, it is to capture succinctly and compellingly their essential purpose and values in a simple statement. Abraham’s book is thus a guide for nonprofits on how *not* to do it. Someone should edit a companion volume of illustrative mission statements for the nonprofit sector.

Selected Recent Client Assignments

- Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies: *diagnostic analysis of approaches to evaluating program performance*
- Asphalt Green: *preparation of a strategic plan*
- Cambridge University: *strategic counsel on Cambridge’s 800th Anniversary £1 Billion Campaign*
- Case Western Reserve University: *counsel on the development of a University strategic plan and strategic plans for the eight Schools*
- French-American Foundation: *strategic counsel on a range of issues*
- Institute of Laryngology and Voice Restoration: *strategic counsel on a range of issues*
- Institute for Music and Neurologic Function: *strategic analysis and preparation of a business plan*
- Jewish Board of Family and Children’s Services: *preparation of a strategic plan and counsel on its implementation*
- Jewish Foundation for Education of Women: *preparation of a strategic plan*
- Metropolitan New York Library Council: *preparation of a strategic plan*
- Museum of American Finance: *strategic counsel on a range of issues*
- New York City Center for Charter School Excellence: *updating of a strategic business plan*
- Pace University: *strategic counsel on a range of issues*
- Princeton University: *strategic counsel on the leadership and organization of research funding*
- Queens University: *preparation of a strategic plan*
- Shorefront YM-YWHA: *preparation of a strategic plan*
- Smithsonian Institution: *strategic counsel regarding Smithsonian Arts*
- Steep Rock Association: *preparation of a strategic plan*
- World Monuments Fund: *preparation of a strategic plan and counsel on a range of organizational issues*
- YWCA of the City of New York: *preparation of a strategic plan*

