

nd there goes another year. Welcome 2019, there is so much in store for you. Each year, NonProfit PRO showcases the forecast for the top trends of the year. We do so by reaching out to key thought leaders in the space, asking them their thoughts on the hot trends for the year from all the across the sector: Big ideas; fundraising and marketing; technology; giving trends and donor relations; leadership strategies; and board development.

This is also a good time to reflect on 2018 because we believe that it's constructive to know what ideas and initiatives worked and had a big impact and which ones fell flat. And as the New Year begins, every nonprofit organization needs to think about what it has learned from 2018 and then brainstorm new and exciting ideas that will take its organization to the next level, bringing in more donations, engaging and retaining more donors and making a bigger impact on the world.

2019 will be the year of innovation, and we believe the sector is going to see some amazing tech capabilities that will revolutionize nonprofit as we know it. But it won't be without its challenges. With the rise of the new era, we cannot only rely on technology solutions. Donor loyalty and engagement with be prominent this year, and nonprofits need to be creative in the ways they communicate with their donors, ensuring that they are maintaining and building authentic relationships that will keep donors passionate about the organization's cause.

Last year, we ended the year with the tax reform. This year, we started the year with a government shutdown, so it's vital for nonprofits to be prepared for the changing political climate. And that means nonprofits need to be flexible and adaptable to any cuts in funding.

Without further ado, meet the all-star cast serving you NonProfit PRO's top 40 nonprofit trends of 2019.

BIG IDEAS

Adaptability

The federal government shutdown starting off the year only reinforces that nonprofits need to be prepared for the impli-

cations of changing government practices and policies that impact our work. We can brace ourselves for a year ahead of trickle-down challenges and frustrations from a government that will start off the year behind after not having worked at least a month. The uncertainty in our political system reminds us that in order to thrive, nonprofits have to find mechanisms that allow for flexibility and other sources of revenue to support their missions. Even if nonprofits don't receive government support, they are impacted by the political uncertainty and changing landscape. — Laura Zumdahl, President and CEO, New Moms

Adoption of For-Profit Practices

Nonprofits will further embrace best practices that have proven successful in the for-profit sector as they continue to transform their organizations, technology and approaches to optimize their ability to meet and exceed their objectives and goals, and to achieve their mission. Continuing an increasing movement to bring what works across the for-profit sector to the nonprofit sector, our community will benefit greatly from effectively integrating the best and losing the rest, when it comes to hallmarks of for-profit enterprise. — David Blyer, CEO, Arreva

Citizen Philanthropy

I think digital will continue to permeate the nonprofit sector with nonprofits looking for new and compelling ways to engage their current and prospective donors on new platforms. Citizen philanthropy will continue to grow as people recognize that people are how change happens at scale. Citizen activists will take on causes they feel they can impact and advocate on behalf of a la the Parkland kids. The business sector will become increasingly proactive in speaking out about social issues aligned with their corporate values and beliefs. — *Lisa Bowman*, *EVP and CMO*, *United Way Worldwide*

Collaborative Philanthropy

As foundations think more deeply about how they can increase their impact at scale, I think we'll see more organizations around the world forming partnerships with other or-

ganizations rather than embarking on projects alone. We saw The Rockefeller Foundation do this in a big way in 2017 when it announced its Co-Impact effort to establish a global model for collaborative philanthropy and social change at scale. The Lemann Foundation has been doing this for years as well, via partnerships with the Omidyar Network and Google.org. I definitely see more organizations following suit. Although collaborative initiatives between organizations require a longer period of discussion between the participating foundations, the joint effort and collaboration—sharing a vision to tackle similar issues and dedicating time and resources to the same goal—gives us all the best chance of getting the results we want. — Denis Mizne, CEO, Lemann Foundation

Data and Analytics

2019 will continue to push toward a greater focus on non-profit organizations getting meaning from their data and using the analytics and data tools to make that more accessible to organizations of all sizes. With so much noise to cut through, it is imperative that we speak to our supporters about what really matters to them. Technology continues to make it easier to look at large sets of data and then derive meaning from it, looking for patterns of behavior (and intent) from those who give to us. — Taylor Shanklin, VP of Marketing, Pursuant

Marketing

Marketing will lead the way as a visible area of transformation and impact—which could see increasing adoption of marketing—everything from brand management, customer (donor) experience transformation, marketing automation, generational marketing, content marketing, digital marketing and more. Of course, almost every facet of nonprofit organizations will see benefits from evolving their approaches through modeling of best practices both in our field and outside of it. — *David Blyer, CEO, Arreva*

Non-Traditional Partnerships

This year is likely to underscore the need for nonprofits to find new ways become less dependent upon government resources to operate, which is going to drive new partnerships across sectors that might not have been considered in the past. We've dealt with this in Illinois for years as the state operated without a budget, but a similar process is now playing out at the federal level with another government shutdown. Ultimately, the organizations that are most proactive in identifying these nontraditional partnerships and finding synergies that strengthen both organizations' capacity will be best insulated from political uncertainty that threatens short- and long-term viability. In our industry, one example of this is the increasing integration of health-care and housing services. Often serving overlapping populations, health-care providers are incentivized to find new ways to reduce the number of low-income patients continuously being readmitted and driving up costs. One of the most effective ways to accomplish this is to provide these patients with stable housing, which creates an opportunity for housing providers to work with health systems to do so. In the process, a new revenue stream is created for the housing provider that's mission-consistent, reducing our reliance on government funding. — Mark Angelini, President, Mercy Housing Lakefront

FUNDRAISING AND MARKETING

Conversational Marketing

Embrace the changing landscape of conversational marketing. I believe that because of the hyperconnected world we have all become accustomed to, we are now all looking for more meaningful, human connection. Your audience is starting to sniff right through the generic messages that could be sent to any donor. Look for ways to use marketing and fundraising automation tools that bring more personalization and start conversations (a two-way dialogue) rather than just pushing. Fundraising and marketing in a way that drives loyalty in your supporters really is about a push-and-pull relationship between you and your donors. You're both giving each other value. Look for ways to open up authentic conversations with those who give to you. — *Taylor Shanklin*, *VP of Marketing*, *Pursuant*

Leveraging Data

This is not a new idea, but the importance of leveraging data to tell your organization's story continues to increase. In a world in which most information is only a Google search away, we have to continue to invest in our ability to provide data that demonstrates our impact on those we serve and connect it to larger social trends. At the same time, we can't lose sight of the human stories that often move potential funders and donors to action. The most successful nonprofits strike a balance between these two often competing approaches and find ways meet audiences where they are and provide them with the information that is most likely to influence their decision to donate, volunteer, etc. — Mark Angelini, President, Mercy Housing Lakefront

New Digital Tools

Using new digital tools to engage donors. Shifting the use of social media to engage in more and meaningful dialogue with donors and advocates for your cause(s). Increased transparency in the allocation and impact of donor dollars. — *Lisa Bowman*, EVP and CMO, United Way Worldwide

Not Going the Traditional Route

I think the notion that there's nothing beyond fundraising to help organizations become sustainable doesn't work. Nonprofits should be thinking of different approaches to generating other resources beyond traditional fundraising—like selling programs or solutions directly to government groups or community groups, for example. For marketing, I think foundations need to really start showing their results. A lot of people have been focusing on showing the importance of the problems they're tackling, and that's great, but people also want to see your results. It's very important to be able to share your results and your solutions to tackling social challenges so that you can better inspire change and attract additional funding for your work. — Denis Mizne, CEO, Lemann Foundation



Peer-to-Peer Fundraising

All hands on deck! Peer-to-peer fundraising is vital for organizations to increase mission reach. With organizations ranging in size and often times competing for the same resources, fundraising efforts can't just fall on the development team anymore. Platforms, like Facebook, are making it easier for individuals to donate to their favorite cause simply because their friends ask on their birthdays. Regardless of the method, It's imperative that every staff member is a fundraiser and leverage their networks to support their organizations. — *Lindrea Reynolds, Director of Marketing and Brand Development, After School Matters*

Storytelling

At the center of marketing and fundraising efforts will be storytelling—much as it is already is across marketing in the for-profit sector. It's something that nonprofits are increasingly beginning to understand and incorporate, but expect to see storytelling play a much more central role across how non-profits are building awareness and engaging and influencing donors and stakeholders through marketing. 2019 will also see storytelling being more holistically incorporated across marketing efforts, from brand management, to social media and email marketing, to website design and annual reports. — David Blyer, CEO, Arreva

Transparency and Accountability

Nonprofits voluntarily taking a position of transparency and accountability will increase. Savvy organizations realize that donors are smart and view their donations as an investment—and they need to be treated that way with regular, transparent information that provides accountability to the public. Nonprofits have long been used to reporting for funders, but switching from a reactive to a pro-active mode and openly sharing about their successes and areas of growth will set apart the organizations that will earn donors trust and thrive in fundraising. — Laura Zumdahl, President and CEO, New Moms

UP-AND-COMING TECH TOOLS

3D Printing

Rather than focusing on a specific technology, I'd emphasize the importance of finding tech solutions that best meet the unique needs of each organization. With the pace of innovation, there are constantly new products and services that promise to increase efficiency, but every one of these is not right for every organization. Ideally, any new technology should have the potential to be easily integrated with existing systems without creating major disruptions in service. Approaching this question a little differently and using an example specific to the housing industry, one up-and-coming technology that is going to dramatically alter how homes are built is the proliferation of 3D printing. Massive multi-family properties will be able to be produced off-site and assembled more quickly and at a lower cost than those created through traditional methods of construction. — Mark Angelini, President, Mercy Housing Lakefront

Artificial Intelligence

AI (artificial intelligence) technology is something nonprofits need to know about and holds potential for great efficiencies and results across many areas. The rising availability and ease of incorporating AI into everything from digital marketing (think chatbots to increase donor engagement across your websites and social media) to leveraging AI (including predictive analytics) to customize and optimize your campaigns, and even specific asks, holds great opportunity for nonprofits. — *David Blyer, CEO, Arreva*

Bots

I've said it before, and I'll say it again: Bots. There are so many various ways that the robots can be used now—from cleaning and de-duping your data, to making your data more meaningful, to being the first line of defense in starting a conversation on your website or Facebook page. — *Taylor Shanklin*, *VP of Marketing*, *Pursuant*

Harnessing the Power of Data

Nonprofits need to be able to harness the power of data—they need to access the data that is available to them to the public domain that can be used to drive their services and fundraising efforts, and they need to make sense of that data for good organizational decision-making. With so much information rapidly coming at us all, nonprofits who find ways to analyze and use technology to communicate data effectively will thrive. Communication tools, like free and open-source software that provide accessibility for all nonprofits to be effective at this, are increasingly essential. — Laura Zumdahl, President and CEO, New Moms

Identifying Tech to Increase Impact

It's always important to remember that nonprofits are not exempt from the challenges and opportunities the rest of the world is facing. For every industry, technology is improving our capacity to communicate internally, increasing productivity, increasing the size of the audiences we can reach, facilitating collaboration across time zones and, ultimately, giving us more opportunity to increase our impact. For nonprofits, the challenge is identifying ways technology can help with that, finding ways to use technology to change how we're delivering strategy. It's critical for nonprofits to lean into technology in tandem with the rest of the world. About two years ago, the Lemann Foundation created an area focusing on digital that includes a mandate to look at all our projects and initiatives and see how technology can improve them. This has really helped us continue to grow and tackle things more efficiently. - Denis Mizne, CEO, Lemann Foundation

Mobile-First Technologies

Text giving and other mobile-first technologies are important for nonprofits to understand and leverage. The donor land-scape continues to shift generationally, and the nonprofit community needs to do better to reach donors where they're at in an increasingly untethered, mobile technology environment. Additionally, while it is important that nonprofits



are aware of up-and-coming technologies, it is imperative that they also understand and embrace how and if technologies will yield ROI when it comes to helping them better achieve their objectives and mission. It will also be essential that nonprofits view technologies from a holistic, fully integrated point-of-view. In 2019, as fragmentation continues to present nonprofits with a sea of siloed technology choices promising transformation, nonprofits should be thinking holistically and take an approach that addresses the needs across the organization in a unified way through a nonprofit ecosystem from a trusted primary provider. — *David Blyer, CEO, Arreva*

New Ways to Digitally Engage Donors

Digital platforms and gaming will start to really proliferate as nonprofits seek new and different ways to engage donors and grow the next generation of philanthropists. — *Lisa Bowman*, *EVP and CMO*, *United Way Worldwide*

Video Editing

There will be an increase in the development of video editing apps. With limited time and resources, nonprofits will need to take advantage of opportunities to share their stories in quick, impactful and convenient ways. — Lindrea Reynolds, Director of Marketing and Brand Development, After School Matters

GIVING TRENDS AND DONOR RELATIONS

Aftermath of 2018 Tax Reform

It really depends on what we see with how giving trended in 2018 as a result of the tax reform on increased personal deduction on charitable deductions. We have observed growth in mega gifts and "uber donors" particularly to educational and health care institutions. — *Lisa Bowman*, EVP and CMO, United Way Worldwide

Donors Will Continue to Give

The change to the federal tax code and its potential negative impact on charitable giving was a major topic of discussion a year ago, but that seems largely unfounded. People give to causes that matter to them and to organizations that consistently demonstrate the ability be good stewards of the resources entrusted to them. Organizations that prove they can achieve lasting positive outcomes, rather than simply outputs, are always going to be in the best position to convince donors to give. — Mark Angelini, President, Mercy Housing Lakefront

Donor Collaboration

We can expect to see more collaboration between different donors, longer-term and more institutional gifts, more flexibility with how gifts are used and organizations really focusing on showing they're actually solving a problem and producing results. I think we'll also see a focus on creating impact that will lead to a systemic change. — *Denis Mizne*, CEO, *Lemann Foundation*

Individual Giving

Government regulations will continue to be a big concern for nonprofits. As nonprofits continue to compete for the same donors and/or membership opportunities, individual giving programs will continue to evolve as fundraisers will find new and creative ways to engage donors. From increased social media giving to strategic influencer marketing campaigns, individuals will be a priority for organizational support. — *Lindrea Reynolds*, *Director of Marketing and Brand Development*, *After School Matters*

More Authenticity

We will continue to see donors crave more authentic relationships from the causes they care about. Determining how to scale better, more personal donor relationships, even to the masses, is an important trend. Focusing on bringing value to the donor and positioning your organization's unique value proposition is critical to cutting through the noise. — *Taylor Shanklin, VP of Marketing, Pursuant*

More Focus on Recurring Gifts

Increased focus on recurring gifts. One thing is sure for everyone in 2019: there will be even more messages vying for our attention. Donors appreciate monthly giving for the ability to spread their giving throughout the year and an increasing number of nonprofits will look to set up monthly giving options (leveraging technology) because of the degree of predictability and stability it provides to year-round fundraising. Giving trends and donor relations in 2019 will also see an increased impact from generational and demographic trends across the landscape. In an increasingly digital and mobile landscape, where time and attention span are at a premium, giving trends and donor relations will need to be analyzed not just from a how much and from whom standpoint, but also from a how (e.g. mobile, desktop, text, mail, event etc.), how often and from where perspective. Clearly, how well a nonprofit expands giving options and opportunities across touchpoints (especially mobile) will play a factor in this regard. — David Blyer, CEO, Arreva

LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Adaptive Change

Leaders have to be focused on solving adaptive challenges rather than technical problems. There are many technical fixes we make to keep organizations running smoothly, but the big challenges that require culture changes are much more difficult (and why they are often avoided or treated like a technical problem). Leaders need to be able to identify this distinction and lead through adaptive change in organizations. — Laura Zumdahl, President and CEO, New Moms



Creating a Empowering Culture

Cross the divide between departments and do this by focusing on your people. By empowering a culture of trust and alignment with your people on the inside, your organization and brand will be empowered. Employment satisfaction and engagement can do a lot for increasing productivity. Focus on your team and other things will fall into place if you do so. I also recommend reading the book, "Dare to Lead," by Brene Brown and checking out the Radical Candor podcast. Creating a culture where feedback is clear and sincere will help to build that trust. — *Taylor Shanklin*, *VP of Marketing*, *Pursuant*

Creative Problem-Solving

Collaboration will be key in 2019. When departments collaborate to meet organizational goals, magic happens. With limited staffing and resources, teams can no longer make critical decisions in isolation. Creative problem solving will be more effective with a diverse group of minds in the room. — Lindrea Reynolds, Director of Marketing and Brand Development, After School Matters

More Oversight in Revenue and Data

Roles that traditionally haven't had "revenue" or "data" responsibility will need to do so. Data is becoming increasingly important to marketers, and marketers are starting to have more input regarding revenue and data-informed decision-making. — Lisa Bowman, EVP and CMO, United Way Worldwide

Organizational Collaboration

Many of the most effective leadership strategies that have served other sectors well will continue to emerge in the non-profit sector as they continue to transform their organizations for increased growth, while achieving their missions. Leadership strategies that are congruent with the purpose-driven nature of nonprofit organizations are likely to continue to be big in 2019, given that the organization and its people are on a mission of social good. While that naturally aligns to servant-style leadership and a "first-ask-why" approach, it also calls out for strategies that involve alignment and collaboration across the organization. Progressive leadership strategies such as these can ultimately fuel tremendous results and a positive culture for nonprofit organizations as the organization, and its people are truly able to focus on and achieve their mission. — *David Blyer, CEO, Arreva*

Strategy and People

There are two things nonprofit leadership teams should be thinking about: strategy and people. We work in a tough field; if you don't have a solid strategy, you're not going to be successful, and you won't inspire the change you want to see in the world. Having that strategy is critical, as is hiring the right people. At the Lemann Foundation, we invest a lot in our people. Currently, we are looking to fill some open positions on the team. I personally interview every finalist, as we believe no decision on hiring is individual. We've established a structured process to give feedback on the applicants to ensure that we

have a consensus as we hire people who will make our team stronger. It's important to invest in the development of people to continue to grow your team and that will organically attract other strong candidates. — *Denis Mizne*, CEO, *Lemann Foundation*

Strong Support System

Fundamentally, strong leadership is about making sure everyone has the support, coaching and resources to do their best work and providing direction that ensures every part of the organization is working together effectively toward a shared vision. Some days this is easier said than done, but the basic concept holds true regardless of the circumstances. With this in mind, I'd argue that the most effective leadership strategies are those that enable you to accomplish these goals within the unique context of your own organization. — Mark Angelini, President, Mercy Housing Lakefront

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Authentic Communication

One of the biggest challenges is finding ways to connect board members to the day-to-day work that's taking place and helping them become comfortable making decisions in their capacity as a board member and in their role as brand ambassadors for the organization. Like donors, board members generally are willing to volunteer their time and devote their resources to the organization because they have a natural affinity for the mission, but they are also busy people with many competing demands for their time. Rather than simply telling them what's happening and how it's improving the lives of the people we serve, we work hard to help them experience firsthand why the work matters by creating opportunities for interaction with staff and residents. We've found that this is the most effective way to keep board members engaged in their roles and enthusiastic about opening new doors for the organization. — Mark Angelini, President, Mercy Housing Lakefront

Board Engagement

Board development is indeed a big topic among nonprofit organizations, and they're faced with challenges that include engaging the board in fundraising and recruiting young people to serve. An increasing number of nonprofits are finding that it's time to rethink how the board functions and thrives, in an increasingly fast-paced and digital world where sitting in a boardroom listening to presentations for hours at a time may not be terribly appealing, especially to a younger crowd and at a time when almost all nonprofits are working hard to increase their board diversity demographically, yielding an equally diverse set of giving capabilities and preferences. — *David Blyer, CEO, Arreva*

Diversity and Equity

Some of the challenges with board development mirror some of the challenges in society with regards to diversity and eq-▶



uity. Boards should represent the community at large as well as the communities served, sometimes those are two different things and that's hard to reconcile. Ensuring that boards are diverse from an age perspective is important, as well given the generational shift that's taking place. — Lisa Bowman, EVP and CMO, United Way Worldwide

Intentional Relationships

A challenge we're seeing is in galvanizing board members to help in strategy and initiatives and to contribute not only financially to the organization, but also with ideas and critical thinking. That being said, the biggest tip I can give is to have an intentional relationship with the board. This means the board shouldn't just be symbolic or a page on your website, but should serve a purpose and grow the organization. To get the most effectiveness from your board, it's important that you have an idea of when you're going to meet with the board, the objective of the meetings, information to share with the board and how you would like to work with them. If you don't have an idea in place with how the meetings and interactions with the board will go, then at the end of the day, your meetings will just be social gatherings, and you'll be left to make important decisions about your organization alone. — Denis Mizne, CEO. Lemann Foundation

Onboarding

I fundamentally believe board members want to contribute and be engaged the causes that attract them to serve on boards, but the most common refrain from board members is that they "don't know how to contribute." This leads to disengagement and frustration on both sides. To harness the power of boards, organizations have to provide board education and onboarding that doesn't just inundate someone new with facts and figures about an organization, but rather helps to ready them to enter into the stream of discussion and strategic decision-making underway in the nonprofit. We have to invest in helping board members connect to our mission and find their opportunities to contribute and we will reap the benefits from their increased engagement. — Laura Zumdahl, President and CEO, New Moms

Setting the Right Expectations

One of the greatest challenges that I hear when talking to non-profit professionals is setting the right expectations with their boards. Setting the expectation to be involved in fundraising somehow (whether through giving, asking or volunteering) is important to do at the very beginning. — *Taylor Shanklin*, *VP of Marketing*, *Pursuant NPPRO*

A few thoughts and tips for nonprofits on board meetings and board member engagement and fundraising as you rethink board development and, ultimately, how your board functions and thrives.

— David Blyer, CEO, Arreva

Board Meetings

- Keep the business meeting short and sweet. Of course, you have good governance in mind, so you have to allow the board to exercise its fiduciary duty by providing financial updates and audit reports. But these should be largely written, with details left to the relevant committees.
- Provide materials electronically. No one wants to carry around a board book everything should be available on an iPad.
- Assume that everyone has read the materials—the meeting should be fast paced and all about discussion, not watching presentations of the same material. Board meetings should be largely discussion among board members—they want to have an influence—why else bother to come?
- Mix up the staff who present/lead discussions. Let the board see further into the organization. Bring in clients to talk about impact or community leaders to talk about the bigger picture. Add variety to the meetings.

- Get outside the boardroom—go on site visits, see the work first hand, have small group discussions, visit other similar organizations. Do this as a group.
- Make the meetings fun! There should be laughter at every meeting. Include lots of social time, like dinners or receptions, so the board can get to know and enjoy each other. Include staff—it's all about building relationships.
- Consider meeting digitally on occasion. Digital meeting technology is just getting better. However, it's hard to imagine a great functioning board that does not ever meet in person.

Board Member Engagement and Fundraising

• If you want to up your board's engagement in fundraising, make it clear when a new member is recruited. While nonprofits almost always have formal or informal expectations around board engagement and fundraising, it is essential that these expectations are communicated and ideally formalized to current board members, especially as you recruit

- new board members. Write a job description that includes some wording around giving, raising from others, and overall expectations. I've heard from nonprofits that have gone beyond the standard "give-or-get" mantra to board members when it comes to fundraising expectations to speak the unspoken and instead say, "Give, get or get off," when it comes to engagement and fundraising.
- Having said that, it is, of course, important to recognize that each person brings a unique set of skills and comfort level. Meet them where they are, but also encourage them to grow in the role through offering opportunities and coaching and consider leveraging technology to help them deliver on board giving goals by engaging their networks. We've seen many of the nonprofit organizations we work with have great success and experience immediate ROI using our software's peer-to-peer fundraising capabilities to greatly extend their reach and influence to their personal and professional networks in delivering on the "get" to achieve board giving goals.



WHO WE ARE

NonProfit**PRO**

NonProfit PRO is the go-to source for nonprofit management and strategy. Developed for thought leaders and innovators, we cover topics ranging from internal issues such human resources, board and volunteer management to technology to tax and legal matters, news and, of course, raising funds. We offer a magazine, website and daily e-newsletter, NonProfit PRO Today, with a fresh look and quick, hard-hitting content as the go-to source for modern nonprofit professionals.

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