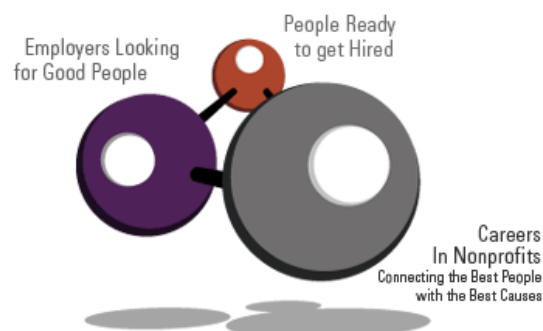


CONNECTIONS

~ a quarterly newsletter from Careers In Nonprofits ~

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TRENDS IN NONPROFIT STAFFING

The economic crisis has affected everyone and every sector, from large corporations to small charities. National trends in the corporate sector are particularly discouraging, with report after report of layoffs and liquidations. To date, effects on the nonprofit sector are not quite so dire, but leaders agree that the full impact of the downturn remains to be seen.

With the economy headlining the nightly news on a daily basis, it's only natural that clients and friends of Careers In Nonprofits would ask us what trends we see in nonprofit hiring and staffing. Our answer can be summarized in three words: caution, consolidation, and communication.

Caution. Despite funding challenges and delays, many nonprofits remain in stable financial condition and are taking a cautious but optimistic approach to 2009, with flat budgets or modest increases. Based on interactions with clients in Chicago and Washington, D.C., the two largest nonprofit markets in the U.S., CNP expects 2009 hiring to be on par with last year. To be conservative, some organizations are turning to temporary staff over permanent hires, but they are still seeking quality people with direct and relevant experience. For every organization that is downsizing, there is another nonprofit hiring. And while few organizations are creating new jobs, many are still hiring for existing or re-imagined positions on their staff. (In the spirit of caution, one word of warning from your friends at Careers In Nonprofits: Beware of underhiring. While it is tempting to hire overqualified candidates in a soft market, they will be the first to vacate when the economy gets back on track.)

Consolidation. Another trend we are seeing among nonprofits is a move toward further job consolidation in efforts to maximize employee talent and minimize personnel costs. Instead of hiring for one specialty area (e.g. Education or Membership), many organizations and associations are consolidating several specialties into one position, such as Director of Education and Membership. This kind of re-imagined position is a great cost-saving solution for many nonprofits and an excellent opportunity for qualified candidates with broad and varied experience in the sector.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

Donors Forum's [Economic Outlook 2009](#)

CONNECTIONS

Welcome to *Connections*, a quarterly newsletter from Careers In Nonprofits designed to keep you informed about nonprofit industry news. As this is our premier edition, we would love to hear from you regarding ideas, topics of interest, and general feedback. Also, let us know if you would like to be a featured client in a future newsletter. We value your input and look forward to continued successes in our work together!

CAREERS IN NONPROFITS

Careers In Nonprofits is a full-service staffing firm serving associations and nonprofit organizations in Chicago, IL, and Washington, DC. We are the nonprofit staffing experts, providing a winning process for temporary, temp-to-perm, and permanent searches, from entry to executive level.

Communication. In the down economy, communicating the cause has become even more of a priority for nonprofit organizations and associations. Nonprofits that have continued to thrive credit a strong commitment to their mission, both on the part of staff and their donors. For this reason, the hottest jobs in the sector at present center around mission-driven communications: Marketing, PR/Communications, and Fundraising. Those who successfully communicate their cause keep the money coming in at a particularly critical time.

Conclusions. There is some good news in these trends: namely, that the sector is not on complete hold while we wait to see what happens. There is vital work to be done, and nonprofits across the country continue to do it in line with their mission. However greatly the sector is affected by the crisis, nonprofit organizations and associations also stand outside the crisis as a reminder that there is more to our nation's health than making money. Nonprofit work, in itself, is an investment in the future.

CLIENT FEATURE: JIM STRUTHERS, MCCORMICK FOUNDATION

Jim Struthers is the Assistant Director of Development, Communities Program, at Chicago-based [McCormick Foundation](#). One of the largest public charities in the US, McCormick Foundation's mission is "to advance the ideals of a free, democratic society by investing in our children, communities and country." McCormick Foundation has awarded more than \$1 billion in grants over its 50 years in existence.

Jim's primary task is to oversee the fundraising programs of the communities department, working with 19 partners around the country in newspaper, broadcast, and sports industries, along with disaster relief and special initiatives. Since the beginning of his tenure at McCormick Foundation in 2007, Jim has identified and evaluated fundraising opportunities with an eye toward streamlining processes and incorporating best practices. With a team of three, he conducts a comprehensive fundraising effort, spearheading campaigns, writing and disseminating all creative pieces, and tracking and analyzing data. Jim is noted for his creativity, problem solving, and forward thinking. His expertise in the technical side of fundraising, particularly through electronic direct mail, web-based donations, and incorporation of cutting-edge software, has had a great impact on the development efforts of his department.

Last year, Jim led the team to raise over \$22 million to be granted back into the community. This total represents 90% of their goal for planned campaigns and exceeds their overall plan for the year due to additional donations in disaster relief. In addition, the foundation matches donations at 50 cents on the dollar, increasing the impact of fundraising efforts. All administrative costs are covered by the foundation and its partners, so 100% of the money raised plus the match goes back into the community. Such outstanding numbers in the midst of an economic downturn led us to wonder what Jim was doing right and how other managers might benefit from his success.

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GUARANTEED ROI

We are committed to helping our clients during this time of financial uncertainty. Please call us and ask how we can work within your budget for your temporary and permanent staffing needs. Be sure to reference our "Staffing Bail Out Plan" and learn how we can provide you a guaranteed ROI when you work with us.

Q. How has the economic downturn affected your work?

A. Many people want to continue to give but are not able to give at the same level. We saw more gifts last year but for fewer dollars. I try to be mindful of ways people can continue to give. It is more important now than ever to be successful in fundraising, because more people need our help than before, and we have the power to help them. When it is tough, I remind myself of that.

Remarkably, we have seen some corporations making larger donations out of a sense of civic responsibility. That helped our fundraising to balance out in the last year despite the economic downturn. There was one local construction company that gave a first time gift of \$100,000 because they had done really well and felt a need to share their success with the community. In conversation, I learned that they had an office in LA in addition to their Chicago office. I mentioned that McCormick had a fund in LA, and they gave an additional gift of \$25,000 to our fund partner there.

Q. What changes have you had to make as a result of the economic downturn?

A. Some changes I had already put into place have been helpful. For example, we consolidated a lot of our direct mail efforts with one vendor in order to save money overall. We have not been able to institute everything we wanted to because we had to scale back. Some changes no longer made sense because of increased cost. We used to bring in a team of 10-12 temps. Now, at our peak, we bring in eight, but we are able to guarantee them employment for a set number of dates. In this economy, I am much more aware of the cost of doing business that affects other people's lives. In fundraising, you do not have the luxury of waiting for the right conditions to raise money. Regardless of what is going on, people are depending on you, and you have to forge ahead and conduct your campaigns. To keep the stress down, I did not watch the news for awhile; if I had let it affect me, I would have crawled into a corner. Instead, I continue to move forward and do the best I can.

Q. Have you adjusted the way you manage staff, and if so, how?

A. One of the senior members of our team went on maternity leave. We had to make a lot of adjustments because we were missing a key player. We had a long-term replacement from Careers In Nonprofits, and she was a lifesaver. But it is not the same as having someone around with the institutional knowledge of your organization. We have worked closely with our partners, put some new programs into place, and automated a lot of processes in order to scale back on temp help, but not everything has gone as smoothly as we would like. With these attempts at streamlining and greater efficiency, I have to make sure everything is done well. Some things have worked, and some we have had to re-evaluate.

I have a great, flexible team of employees, including temps, whom we affectionately refer to as the "holiday team" due to their critical role in assisting with our holiday fundraising campaigns. We make sure there is space in our main office so that we can all be together rather than housing the holiday team in a conference room or somewhere else in the building. They all step up and take on responsibility. We always hope we can get people for an entire campaign, but we also try to be flexible, recognizing that temporary workers need to take time off for interviews. One member of our holiday team got a permanent job mid-campaign; we were sorry to see him go, but also very excited for him. I did temp work when I first moved to the city. I have been in the same position and was treated well, and I want to extend the same courtesy to others.

Q. What are some best practices you have identified for managing this year's fundraising goal given the current economic environment?

A. It's really more of an overall best practice, and that is to consider the scale of campaigns that I have going and approach business partners and vendors accordingly. If you consider how many campaigns you do in a year, it may be better to ask or negotiate with the whole in mind rather than building each campaign piecemeal. I am not afraid to say, "You're our partner in this," and to ask for a better price, a donation, or some other form of contribution. It's important to be aware of your donors, to honor donor intent, and to acknowledge gifts in proper fashion.

Another important practice for me has been to streamline the way we do our business. I am always mindful of using my time and my staff's time wisely. Sometimes you might spend more money to outsource rather than have staff work on a given project, but you have to consider whether it is better to have your senior staff folding letters or to bring in someone else so that senior staff can focus their energy on other things.

Q. What are some best practices you have identified for hiring/managing staff and measuring staff performance?

A. In hiring, I try to paint as true a picture of the organization as I can so that potential employees know what they are walking into. I outline responsibilities and duties as clearly as possible with the caveat that things can change. In the event of a disaster relief effort, for example, our attention will shift almost immediately. We can launch a disaster relief campaign within 10 hours of an event. We have a disaster relief bible, of sorts, that outlines everything we need to do to pull a team together and make it happen.

Likewise, in working with a staff, I make sure everyone knows what their responsibilities and duties are. I am always working on defining the team, what each member's responsibilities are, and challenging them to grow. Life should be a growing experience, and we should always be learning. My own background is broad—in music theater performance, sales, and marketing. Most of my team members are young and will be in the workforce for a long time. I try to identify skill sets they can develop that can translate to other things. I try to make a good environment, and I have an open-door policy. Work should be fun.

When it comes to staff performance, it is important to be firm when things are not going the way you need them to but never to demean anyone. I congratulate people on their successes and thank them for their hard work. I try to approach everything with a sense of humor and to give credit where credit is due. I believe in team effort. I am only as good as the rest of the team, because I am part of the team. If something goes wrong, I will take responsibility for my team, because it happened under my watch. I am always looking at how to improve things, and that includes my own work. Just because we have done something a certain way does not mean it is the best way.

Q. What do you see as your greatest strength or expertise in fundraising? What has been the key to your success?

A. I have always been a big picture person, which has helped me to be successful in many fields, fundraising included. I am able to focus on the bottom line and overall goal and outline the steps we have to take to get to it. Being able to communicate and share the vision with people has been invaluable. I make a point to remind my staff that we get there in baby steps: here's what we have to do before we can get to that next step. Every now and then, I like to have my staff think back to how we did business a year ago and compare it to how we are doing now. The first time to do something is always the hardest, and it gets smoother after that. It is encouraging to see that, overall, we are headed in the right direction. It is helpful to be able to look at things from many different levels.

Q. What are some resources that have been helpful to you in your work as a fundraiser?

A. I am always looking for new ideas, best practices, and things that can help me to improve what I do. People are the greatest resource, so I do a lot of networking, talking to other fundraisers and sharing ideas. I do not hesitate to pick up the phone and call a former colleague or someone I met at an event, and I try to return the favor when people call on me, like a professional courtesy. There are not too many new fundraising ideas out there; you just have to put your own spin on things to make them unique to you. There are so many associations, like Donors Forum and AFP, and I also read industry magazines. I have my own subscription to Chronicle of Philanthropy and Crain's. I know I could get them through work, but I like having my own copy to read on the bus and at home. Sometimes I just skim, and other times I find them full of helpful material.

Q. What book have you read recently that you would recommend to a friend, and why would you recommend it?

A. I would recommend *The Time Traveler's Wife*, by Audrey Niffenegger, which I read several years ago. The plot sticks in my head, and I am not sure why. The last book I read was *Odd's Lot*, by Dean Koontz. I bought it from a resale shop and read it over a holiday weekend. I enjoy reading to get out of my own mind and put myself someplace else—a form of escapism. It is almost too much just trying to keep up with magazine subscriptions, like the Smithsonian, which I find really interesting. I wish I had more time to read, and I do read a lot on the bus going to and from work.