



Wiley Nonprofit Series

High Performance Nonprofit Organizations

Managing Upstream
for Greater Impact

Christine W. Letts
William P. Ryan
Allen Grossman

Nonprofit leaders are beginning to confront the most important unfinished business of their sector. Having invented scores of successful model programs to address virtually every type of social problem or goal, they are discovering that large-scale, sustained impact remains elusive. Today, the only way to get the full benefit of successful programs, however, is for nonprofit leaders to begin building high performance organizations—nonprofits that are capable of creating sustained, effective impact. That requires reversing decades of under-investment in the capacity of nonprofits. A sector that has been indifferent, if not hostile, to the needs of its organizations, where leaders are forced to manage upstream, against countless obstacles, now needs to apply its ingenuity and passion to the challenge of creating high performance organizations.

Drawing on management techniques used by successful managers in both businesses and nonprofits, *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations* outlines approaches that nonprofits can use to build their capacity for learning, innovating, ensuring quality, and motivating staff. Illustrated with case studies and examples, the book outlines processes for achieving these goals, including:

- **human resources management**—to attract and develop employees truly in synch with an organization's mission
- **benchmarking**—to identify practices that best meet a nonprofit's needs
- **responsiveness and quality systems**—to continuously review and upgrade quality of service
- **product development**—to tap the talents of every employee to create effective programs

The authors argue that these processes—far from corrupting a nonprofit with practices that

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evolved to make companies more profitable—actually help an organization convert its values and integrity into results for clients and communities. These adaptive capacities help nonprofits deliver on their mission, building the model organization that will make the biggest impact with model programs.

High Performance Nonprofit Organizations goes further, laying out an agenda for changing the nonprofit environment, making it more supportive of its managers and more aware of the potential of organizational capacity. The authors assess the special opportunity of several stakeholders—including the nonprofit board, foundations, and the national office of multisite nonprofits—to create a new culture that values organizational performance. For the nonprofit manager trying to build an organization that is truly responsive to its clients and community, *High Performance Nonprofit Organizations* is an essential review of best practices. For the board member, foundation program officer, or nonprofit leader trying to create sustained impact, it is a provocative challenge to deal with the sector's unfinished business with a new approach.

About the authors

CHRISTINE W. LETTS is a lecturer in public policy and Executive Director of the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard University.

WILLIAM P. RYAN is a Cambridge, Massachusetts-based consultant to foundations and nonprofit organizations.

ALLEN GROSSMAN is a senior lecturer of business administration at the Harvard Business School.

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About the Authors

Christine W. Letts is a lecturer in public policy and executive director of the Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard. She has extensive experience in private and public management. At the Kennedy School of Government, Letts teaches courses and executive education in nonprofit management, general public management, and organizational change. As the executive director of the Hauser Center, she is responsible for coordinating activities related to building nonprofit curriculum, research, and executive education for nonprofit leaders. Research interests include organizational performance in nonprofit organizations and the impact of funding practices on nonprofit capacity. Before joining the Kennedy School, she served in the cabinet of Governor Evan Bayh of Indiana. Prior to that she was a vice president in manufacturing for Cummins Engine Co. Letts holds an MBA from Harvard Business School.

William P. Ryan is a Cambridge-based consultant specializing in strategies to strengthen the performance of nonprofit organizations. His research, analysis, and program development help both nonprofits and foundations develop capacity-building strategies that respond to organizational and sector-wide challenges. He is currently investigating the growth of for-profit social service providers, the emergence of alternative nonprofit governance strategies, and the prospects for value-added grantmaking. His current clients and project partners include the Rockefeller Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations at Harvard, and Family Service America. He received a B.A. in religion from

Columbia University and a M.P.A. from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Allen Grossman is a senior lecturer of business administration at the Harvard Business School and a visiting scholar at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He served as president and chief executive officer of Outward Bound USA for 6 years before stepping down in 1997 to work exclusively on the challenges of creating high-performing nonprofit organizations and the relationship between a nonprofit's management and its social impact. Before joining the nonprofit sector, he served as a regional chief executive of Albert Fisher PLC and chairman of the board of Grossman Paper Company, a national distributor of packaging products. During this period, Mr. Grossman served on and chaired a number of nonprofit boards. He received a B.S. in corporate finance from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.