

# Encore

A Spotlight on Philanthropy in the  
Performing Arts

Alexander Haas  
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

First Things *First*



April 19, 2018  
[www.fundraisingcounsel.com](http://www.fundraisingcounsel.com)



from the standing-desk of  
**David H. King** | President & CEO

**David King**, President & CEO of Alexander Haas, has been named a participating member of the **Forbes NonProfit Council**. Forbes Nonprofit Council is an invitation-only organization for senior-level executives in successful nonprofit organizations. *The below article first appeared on the Council's website.*

## 5 Ways Perfection is Killing Your Fundraising Progress

Recently, I was given a piece of business advice that has stuck in my head: "Perfection is the enemy of progress."

This statement sounds odd at first, as many of us think of perfection as the goal. After all, each of us wants to be the best, right? Yet, as I roll it over in my head, I realize there is profound wisdom in that simple statement.

Because I have spent nearly 30 years as a nonprofit fundraising consultant, this statement got me thinking about how perfection sabotages the efforts of the people around me - those in nonprofit development roles. There are five ways that I see the pursuit of perfection hold clients back in their fundraising progress.

- 1. Perfection Consumes Time:** Time is one of the most valuable resources we have. Yet, I repeatedly see clients spending hours and hours going through a myriad of edits to their case statement, re-editing their own edits and striving for perfection. It's as if they believe getting the perfect words on paper will be the tipping point between their success and failure. While editing and proofreading are important, at some point you must put down the red editing pen, stop talking about it and start moving forward with your campaign.
- 2. Perfection Feeds Procrastination:** Another prevalent example of the cost of perfection is perpetual donor cultivation. This often manifests itself as the

development officer who never gets around to the solicitation of donors because they are always looking for the perfect time, the perfect project, the perfect team, the perfect economy, the perfect naming opportunity - the perfect whatever. The reality is, perfection rarely comes. So, a development officer waiting for the perfect set of circumstances to make an ask never makes the ask. Instead, they end up stuck working on a perpetual cycle of cultivation steps.

- 3. Perfection Forgets Fundamentals:** There are some very real opportunity costs associated with a development officer who's stuck in a cycle of seeking perfection. Most obvious is that, when they don't solicit the donor, the donor probably won't give a gift. This is a fundamental principle that development officers often lose sight of. The loss of contributed income to the organization is real when you're not actively engaged in soliciting donors.

[Continue it here...](#)

### **Best of the Web: Industry Trends**

One of the challenges facing development leadership today is the retention of key staff members. Turnover in development is high. In fact, some would argue it is an unprecedented high. A culture of numbers - dollars, donors, visits, solicitations, etc. - has become the norm and now seems to dominate many of the manager/staff interactions.



Technology has fostered and facilitated this philosophy, which tracks every possible activity value. In many ways, this has made our industry more disciplined - something that can be viewed as being positive. But there's a backlash brewing.

We frequently hear from high performing staff members saying their managers do not care to hear anything but statistics. These individuals, who were originally hired for their ability to close gifts and form strong and lasting relationships in addition to raising funds for the organization, are left wondering if their abilities really matter.

[Here's timely insight for leading a team...](#)

## **Did you download our new guide?**

### ***A Guide to Selecting Fundraising Counsel***

The decision to engage outside counsel is an important step for your organization. Inside our guide you will find information on the 6 crucial steps to selecting counsel.

[\*\*Get to Guide\*\*](#)

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### **On Board and Organizational Governance: Insights from AGB President**

**David King**, Alexander Haas President & CEO, speaks with **Rick Legon**, President of the Association of Governing Boards, which was founded to educate board trustees and presidents of primarily colleges and

universities on their fiduciary responsibilities.

**Whether you serve on the board of a ballet or opera, a college, or a community organization, best practices in governance share many of the same ideas: leadership takes work.**

One concept Legon discusses the concept of "consequential governance": Do you ask the questions that truly matter to the future of your organization? To engage in the real work of the institution requires critical thinking and the willingness to ask the hard questions about the issues facing your arts organization now and into the future.

[Have a listen....](#)



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## We'd Like You to Know....

### **Transforming *Institutions***

We are proud of our long history of providing fundraising consulting services to performing arts organizations.

[Check out our past and present clients here.](#)

### **Face It: Arts Organizations are Different Our Transformational *Fundraising Services***

**Alexander Haas** serves a cross section of performing arts organizations throughout the country. We specialize (and delight in) what makes you distinctive. As an arts institution, you have different needs at different times. We can help you create real results.

[Read all about them!](#)



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