



Encore

A Spotlight on Philanthropy in the Performing Arts

Alexander-Haas
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

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from the desk of
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A Better World, One Day At A Time

One of the benefits of working with organizations across the country is the opportunity to see and comment on common issues and trends we observe across the field, drawing from our diverse experiences over the years.

In this moment, optimism and ambition abound for many organizations, with strategic planning and major campaigns in the works or underway and donors making significant philanthropic investments in causes they support. Now that we've passed the fourth anniversary of COVID-19 entering our lives, most institutions have finally found a new operating norm. The professional landscape for employees, however, is still very much a work in progress.

The practice of development is increasingly challenging and complex, with staff balancing administrative and managerial responsibilities, face-to-face relationship building with donors, and the ongoing need for professional development to stay technically proficient. A full slate of tasks, pressures, and demands compete for priority on a day-to-day basis.

Employee turnover and the problem of finding quality candidates for development roles at all levels is perhaps the most difficult challenge facing nonprofits today. Practically every organization I've encountered has continually been in some stage of the hiring process for several years, a reaction in part to realigned priorities among development professionals and unrealistic expectations by leadership. This culture of instability, competing priorities, and increased workload has naturally led to frustration and burnout among many of those who have remained.

When each of us chose a life in nonprofit development, at least in the beginning, we accepted a higher calling to improve the quality of life for those who would benefit from our work. It's baked into our DNA that we should be spending our days making the world a better place, but that idealism is too often overtaken by the realities of daily life.

Our organizations' ambitions and ongoing efforts to strengthen society will only be possible through a healthy, sustainable work culture for employees. But likewise, all of us who work on the front lines of philanthropy should also strive to rise above the functional, often unglamorous, daily tasks of our jobs in the service of a collective

outcome that transcends any of our individual roles.

Such a shared, renewed commitment to our higher calling will surely lead to a better world for all of us, working together one day at a time. It is a cause worthy of our life's work, indeed.

[Our Team](#)

Targeted Efforts Don't Guarantee Arts Audience Building

A report from the **Wallace Foundation** found that targeted audience building could not be relied on to predict growth in revenue. Some target audiences (e.g., younger audiences) failed to meet box office expectations. While most organizations within the study were able to expand their target audience, changes were often more modest than what organizations had hoped.

Key Findings

- Many organizations saw overall audience gains coupled with a decrease in attendance frequency.
- Even dramatic target-audience gains generally did not affect overall attendance, as organizations largely chose target audiences with a small initial presence.
- The report found numerous assumptions—including the “myth of the long, slow escalator,” a linear path from new audience member to highly engaged donor—hindered organizations’ ability to connect with new audiences they hoped to reach.
- Strategies such as “crossover” programming and presenting at off-site venues were not often successful in converting target audiences to frequent attendees.
- Many organizations found that these programs still held value in reaching new kinds of audiences and diversifying their programming.

The report, [In Search of the Magic Bullet: Results from the Building Audiences for Sustainability Initiative \(PDF\)](#), can be found [here](#). *PND, 3-1*

[Our LinkedIn](#)

Midlevel Donors Offer Huge Opportunity

According to a new report, donors, who give \$1,000 to \$10,000 annually, are extremely loyal. While they're unlikely to move into the ranks of major donors, they are good prospects to increase their giving within that range and help organizations through lean times.

The report found a variety of shared characteristics that can help fundraisers court midlevel donors, retain them, and increase their giving.

Key Findings

- 53% of midlevel donors have been giving to the charity they support for 10 years or more.

- These donors also tend to be older; the lion's share are either baby boomers (61%) or members of the silent generation (21%). Only 13% are Generation X, and 5% are millennials and Gen Z. 59% identified as women, while 39% identified as men, and 3% chose not to answer.
- Most midlevel donors connected with their favorite causes when they were young; 72% engaged with their cause by the age of 39. The bulk of those people (42%) connected at age 20 to 39, while a smaller share (19%) connected in their teens, and the remainder (11%) found their cause at age 12 or younger.
- Nearly a third of midlevel donors have made a bequest to a charity, and 23% are considering it. The survey data also pins down a good age range for fundraisers to begin approaching people about charitable bequests.

Midlevel Advice

- **Make your website easy to navigate.** It's important for donors to be able to find the group's mission statement and donation page. Nearly 40% of midlevel donors visit the charity's website when researching them.
- **Change the overhead narrative.** Donors who are baby boomers or older believe roughly 77% of funds should be spent on programs, while millennials and Gen Z give an estimate of 66%, allowing a third for overhead.
- **Diversify donors.** 89% of midlevel donors are white, which is a wake-up call for organizations to broaden their internal makeup, the makeup of their staff, the makeup of their boards, so they attract donors of color.
- While donor-advised funds are quite popular to **talk about in fundraising circles**, only 20% of respondents said they had them. Another 8% said they were considering starting one. *COP, 3-14*

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"Be" Haas Inducted into Hall of Fame

Beatrice "Be" Haas- Atlanta's First Fundraising Consultant, was honored as one of **The Georgia Women of Achievement Hall of Fame** at a ceremony in March. Be, one of our Founding Partners, was one of four outstanding women lauded at the event held during Women's History Month.

Be was honored for being a trailblazer! She founded and was CEO of the first fundraising consulting firm in Atlanta in 1954. She spent many years as an active volunteer for the **League of Women Voters**. She was twice honored as *Woman of the Year* in Atlanta and served on the Board of Directors for several businesses and nonprofit organizations. In November 1993, she received the first *Lifetime Achievement Award* ever given by the **Georgia Chapter of NSFRE**. Her enormous impact on the community is because of her tireless work as a business, civic, and philanthropic volunteer, and it is because of that work that she was inducted into the Georgia Women of Achievement Hall of Fame.

The Georgia Women of Achievement was established after Rosalyn Carter approached Wesleyan College* with the idea of establishing a center to recognize Georgia's most distinguished women. She was among some of the state's greatest leaders as a founding committee member which created and established this organization. The first induction to the GWA Hall of Fame was held in 1992. Since then, the organization has been celebrating Georgia's women of achievement during Women's History Month in fields such as the arts, business, government, health, sciences, journalism, and more.

Whether you knew Be or not, we urge you to watch this celebration of her life and work from her family and colleagues [here](#).



**Alumni Client Partner*

We Know the Performing Arts

For more than 35 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with leading performing arts and cultural organizations across the country that help communities be a better place to live. Just ask our clients.

[Our Arts Client Partners](#)

Face It: Arts Organizations are Different

Our services aren't cookie cutter. We don't operate with a boilerplate, merely changing names and locations. We craft each and every service we provide to match your organization's unique needs, wants and abilities. We work hard and expect you to do the same. Together we can help you transform your arts organization, your fundraising, and the unique community you serve.

Whether your need is in Capital Campaign, Annual Fund Campaign, Major Gifts, Leadership Annual Giving, Planned Giving or all of the above, we take a fresh approach to nonprofit fundraising.

[Our Services](#)



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