



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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It's the People!

As part of a campaign readiness assessment, I recently met individually with eight members of an advancement team. This team has been through a significant number of leadership changes over the past decade, so professional development has generally been put on the back burner. However, everyone I met with told me - unprompted - how appreciative they were that their new Vice President reworked the budget to ensure everyone on the team would have at least one professional development opportunity annually. The decision to prioritize the team's professional growth clearly made a huge statement and is positively impacting morale, job satisfaction and the inclination to stay at the institution.

What a great reminder of how important it is to invest time, effort, and resources into developing the people who ensure our organizations' success day in and day out.

As fundraisers, we know that it is easier and less expensive to retain a donor than to acquire one. This holds no matter where they fall on the donor spectrum—annual, major, or planned giving. It's exactly why we develop donor retention strategies through various cultivation, stewardship, and communication plans. Then, we allocate resources to those strategies, execute our plans, analyze our results, and tweak as needed, year after year. That's a very high level, but it's the general cycle.

As leaders, managers, and/or supervisors, we should apply this same "cycle" concept to retaining staff. After all, **it is generally easier and less expensive to retain a top performer or a rising star than to lose them and have to go to market to replace them.**

Turnover disrupts workflow and results in significant financial and organizational costs. From recruitment expenses to lost productivity during the transition period, the impact of turnover can be staggering, no matter where the employee falls on the employment longevity spectrum. I've seen:

- a rising star take another job because they didn't know how to talk to their supervisor about their career goals and professional development;
- a mid-level manager with a proven track record for building successful

- programs leave for another position because she was passed over for a promotion several years in a row; and
- a seasoned and successful gift officer with a long institutional memory, make a career change because he didn't believe he was valued by leadership.

In all these examples, the employees didn't want to leave; they just didn't see a path that made staying feel like a strategic career choice. So, they moved on, and the institutions they served lost out. Programs were disbanded or put on hold, gift conversations had to be started months later, and, very importantly, institutional memory was lost. ROI took years to rebuild and be realized.

Advancement is a relationship business, but leading, managing and/or supervising should be a relationship business, too. Don't forget about your people! Make sure you talk to them about their career aspirations and professional development needs. Be disciplined about setting annual goals and reviewing progress towards goals on a regularly scheduled basis. Commit to having candid two-way conversations about performance and what the future might look like.

Developing and retaining your team takes time and we all know there is never enough time in non-profit work. Non-profiters are deeply driven and committed to fulfilling the missions they so passionately serve. If devoting time to your people is an issue for you, I encourage you do some self-reflection and evaluate if you are spending more time on what seems urgent or what is most important.

I hope you come to the conclusion that what is most important is your organization's success and then realize that that success is contingent upon having a talented, dedicated, appreciated, and thriving team to fulfill that mission. Remember, it's all about the people!

[Our Team](#)

9 Ways to Raise More From Donor-Advised Funds

1. Don't wait until December to focus on DAF gifts.

Don't wait until December to start asking donors to make a DAF gift...you might not get the money by the end of the year. Ask donors, "Have you done a health check on your DAF lately?" and mentioning DAFs in fundraising appeals to donors at all levels.

2. Remind DAF donors to ask for a distribution.

DAF account holders must take action to trigger a donation. Some assume their DAF provider automatically makes distributions to charities each year. Suggest automatic distributions from DAFs as a way to make giving easier for donors while securing recurring income for your nonprofit.

3. Make the most of your data.

For starters, gather as much data as possible on DAF gifts and analyze reports regularly. Look for patterns, such as fund providers that make a high volume of distributions to your organization and advisers or other employees at those institutions who were involved, which can help guide your outreach strategies.

4. Treat DAF supporters like potential big donors.

Look at data on gift amounts and renewal rates of DAF donors to gain insights into their giving capacity and determine how best to engage them. If a first-time supporter makes a \$100 gift through a DAF, treat them as if they have given at a higher level. This special attention can help increase giving from individuals with DAFs.

5. Try to learn more about anonymous donors.

Processing an anonymous DAF gift? Call the sponsoring organization to say thanks and verify that there is no additional information about the donor that your organization could use to steward them. You may be surprised how much more information you can receive.

6. Connect with DAF administrators and advisers.

These professionals want to be helpful advisers to their clients. Make their jobs easier by providing simple talking points about your work, which can be shared with donors who are interested.

7. Tap into your networks.

Attend philanthropic events in your city and try to meet people who work at DAF sponsoring organizations. Ask how your nonprofit could be good partners to them and help them serve clients interested in your work. Try to build bridges to these professionals through existing supporters.

8. Promote DAFs as planned gifts.

Some DAFs become “orphans” when the person who owns the fund dies with no plan for a successor adviser and no clear direction on how the money should be spent. Be smart and talk to your donors about leaving their DAFs your organization in their will or including it among the beneficiaries. Mention DAFs in marketing materials about planned giving to make sure donors keep them in mind as another way to leave a legacy.

9. Just ask.

Ask your donors if they have a DAF; if so, encourage them to give through it.

COP, 4-23

[Our LinkedIn](#)

Value of Volunteer Time Increases

The value of a volunteer hour in the US during 2023 was \$33.49, up \$4.95 from 2020. It's a 5.3% increase from 2022. The value is estimated from data collected in 2023, and the figure illustrates the valuable and significant contributions that volunteers make every day to support our communities and nation.

In a state-by-state comparison (including the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico), Massachusetts had the highest volunteer value at \$40.97 per hour, followed closely by Washington state at \$40.28. The lowest state value was in Mississippi at \$25.42. It was \$15.82 per hour for Puerto Rico and \$50.88 per hour for the District of Columbia.

The latest value, calculated by the University of Maryland's Do Good Institute, is based on annual average hourly earnings estimates from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

Charitable organizations most frequently use the value of volunteer time to recognize the amount of community support they receive from their volunteers. Corporations also use the figure to calculate the value of staff volunteer efforts in communities nationwide. *The Nonprofit Times, 4-23*

[Our Facebook](#)

Do You Need Help With Your Membership?

Do you find yourself looking for ways to increase your membership? Membership Consultants is offering a membership marketing seminar in June that can help. We at Alexander Haas know from experience that they have good ideas that lead to great results.

[Go here for more information.](#)



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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