

5 Ways Your Mission (Still) Drives Financial Success

It may be hard to always prioritize the purpose of your organization when mired in regulations, politics and financial uncertainty. Yet, any sustainable financial model must align with the reason your organization exists in the first place. Why does your organization exist? It should be spelled out clearly in your mission statement.

Checking in with your mission statement is like taking your organization's pulse. This keeps oxygen flowing to your leaders and volunteers. It attracts and transports resources to support the body of the organization. Everyone works harder with a clear understanding of why they are needed.

Here are five ways that your mission still drives financial success, whether your organization is new or has been in operation for decades.

1. Avoid shiny objects.

One-time infusions of cash among not-for-profits (a.k.a. ice bucket challenges) grab a lot of headlines and social network attention, but they are not sustainable revenue streams. Not-for-profits are cautioned from spending too much time on how to duplicate a big public relations splash, and instead focus on the activities and outreach that truly reflect the mission and goals of their organizations.

2. Sustain inspiration.

A mission-centered communications approach will help staff, volunteers and other stakeholders remain committed to the original intent of your organization. It shouldn't be assumed that everyone who encounters your organization has heard

of it before. Reinforce key messages that reflect your mission through all training, marketing, events, campaigns and reporting.

3. Avoid non-mission critical expenses.

When developing budgets or determining how to apply resources in daily operations, board members and staff must return regularly to the mission to support their decisions. This approach also supports transparency and ease of reporting because everyone is clear on how expenditures are supporting the mission.

4. Manage compliance.

Preservation of tax-exempt status is mainly concerned with whether or not the purpose of the not-for-profit organization is actually being fulfilled through the various activities of the organization. Deviation from mission can put the organization's status at risk. However, if the organization's leaders and staff are keeping mission at the heart of every decision, non-compliance risk is lower.

5. Clarify goals.

Perhaps leaders or staff don't agree on the monthly or annual goals of the organization. Perhaps the original intent of the organization is no longer needed in the same way in a community. In these instances, returning to mission is still important to clarify and support the evolution of the organization.

Are you concerned that your organization is veering off mission in any of these areas? LvHJ's audit team offers complimentary board and staff educational training and meeting facilitation to provide third-party validation of mission-based governance and controls. Learn more at <http://lvhj.com/expertise/not-for-profits/>

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