

Book Summary

You've Gotta Have Heart

By Cass Wheeler

Introduction: Leading with Heart

As its longtime CEO, Cass Wheeler has helped to build the American Heart Association into one of the most respected nonprofits in the world. In *You've Gotta Have Heart*, he shares the secrets to AHA's success and inspires readers to make their nonprofit organizations the very best they can be and to go from good to great. His central theme is that today's nonprofits must adopt more for-profit strategies to survive and thrive into the future. With that in mind, Wheeler lays out a measurable challenge: for every reader to increase his or her organization's or operation's effectiveness by five percent (or better) over current projections. This book will show nonprofits how to achieve that goal and much more.

Chapter One:

A Mission Statement is Not the Same as a Sense of Mission

Nonprofit organizations would not and could not exist without a pervasive sense of mission. However, while those in the nonprofit community possess a dedication to the causes and people they serve, they cannot fulfill their goals through heart and soul alone. Nonprofits need good leadership and smart management. This chapter provides guidance to nonprofits large and small on combining a deep sense of mission with a strong sense of business. Wheeler addresses the particular challenges nonprofit face in the 21st century and provides advice on successfully combining mission and strategic management.

Chapter Two:

When Everyone Points North: Developing a Clear Decision Making Framework and Business Model

As crucial as a sense of mission is to the success of a nonprofit organization, too many nonprofits try to pursue every idea that relates to their missions. How do you decide which good ideas are worth your time and resources? According to Wheeler, the key is to develop a clear decision making framework, which will ensure that you achieve the greatest results for your organization. This framework includes: 1) defining your core values, 2) determining your strategic driving force and 3) assessing your business model. As Wheeler explains, sharing the story of how the American Heart Association honed its own decision making process, "It ain't always easy, but it's worth it."

Chapter Three:

The Power of a Breakthrough Goal

There is no reason that nonprofits should not challenge themselves every day to have more impact on the world. For this reason, Wheeler asserts that every nonprofit should adopt a "breakthrough goal"—a specific, bold objective that will challenge the organization to achieve more than it ever has before. Like John F. Kennedy's breakthrough goal to land a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s, a nonprofit's breakthrough goal provides accountability and energizes everyone involved. Wheeler outlines a four-step process to explain how the American Heart Association set a

breakthrough goal—to reduce coronary heart disease, stroke, and key risk factors by 25 percent by 2010 among the entire population of the United States—and how any organization can set and reach a breakthrough goal, too.

Chapter Four:

Break Out the Big Brass *Brand*

The words “marketing” and “customer” do not sit well with some nonprofit leaders, but Wheeler asserts that, in this day and age, nonprofits have no other choice but to think in terms of traditionally for-profit concepts of advertising and marketing. Wheeler cautions readers that if they do not embrace the notion that they have “customers,” they will lose out to the many for-profits and nonprofits that do adopt this belief. This chapter covers topics such as branding, market research, paid advertising and corporate sponsorship from the nonprofit perspective. Wheeler also shares the in-depth case study of the American Heart Association’s hugely successful Go Red for Women campaign, which included significant marketing and advertising efforts.

Chapter Five:

Bold Moves and Best Practices

When it comes to serving their missions and making the world a better place, nonprofits must continually challenge themselves to do more. There is no reason why nonprofits cannot be early adopters, bold innovators and best-in-class practitioners. Wheeler challenges readers to ask themselves: Where can we be more innovative? More creative? More tech savvy? More streamlined? More appealing to the next generation of donors and volunteers? This chapter highlights some innovative moves and best practices of the American Heart Association and advises readers on how to create similar programs. Topics include: suggestions for bigger, bolder fundraising, leveraging new technologies and embracing best practices in diversity,

Chapter Six:

Building the Best Staff

People are nonprofit organizations’ greatest assets. It is crucial that organizations of all sizes and budgets find and retain employees who are qualified, skilled, experienced and committed to their missions. And it is equally important that an organization’s business strategy drive its human resources strategy. In this chapter, Wheeler addresses the specific challenges nonprofits face in recruiting and retaining top talent and reminds readers of the unique benefits a nonprofit can offer its employees. He provides straightforward advice on developing an overall people strategy and effectively interviewing job candidates (hint: train your interviewers!). Wheeler also outlines the American Heart Association’s practice of classifying all employees as High-Potential, Medium Potential and Low-Potential, with the goal of stacking the organization with High-Potential people. Finally, this chapter provides sage advice on the delicate task of addressing poor performers.

Chapter Seven:

Inspiring the Best Work: Managing Nonprofit Employees

Once you have a great team on board, how do you inspire, lead and manage them to achieve all that they are capable of? Unfortunately, many nonprofit workers have “fallen into” management roles or, as is increasingly common today, some nonprofit managers have come from for-profit backgrounds and have not adapted their style and skills to the nonprofit environment. In this chapter, Wheeler shares his opinions on what makes a great nonprofit manager and advises managers on best practices for success. He supplies many specific, actionable tips, such as how to build trust among your staff and how to most effectively give praise.

Chapter Eight:

Recruiting and Guiding Your Volunteers and Board of Directors

Nonprofits need a plan for recruiting, retaining and guiding volunteers, just as they need a plan for managing their paid staff. According to Wheeler, the most effective framework for managing both paid staff and volunteers is the concept of “volunteer/staff partnerships”—fostering a true team environment. This chapter shares detailed techniques for creating this partnership atmosphere, recruiting volunteers at every level, providing volunteers with job descriptions and even “firing” volunteers when absolutely necessary. Wheeler also shares essential information about building and working with a board of directors. In the final section of the chapter, he introduces some unique concepts for nonprofits to consider, such as competency-based boards and volunteer expert panels.

Chapter Nine:

Influencing Public Policy: Nonprofit Advocacy and Lobbying

Currently, very few nonprofits lobby the government, often because they believe it is illegal or too expensive. In reality, nonprofit advocacy and lobbying are completely legal (within limits) and can be accomplished even on a small budget. Wheeler strongly encourages all nonprofits to consider lobbying and other advocacy work. As he persuasively explains, you can advance your mission one person at a time, or you can work with governments to enact laws that advance your mission on a far larger scale. Wheeler provides several examples of nonprofit advocacy, ranging from small nonprofits lobbying against the proposed closing of a community childcare center to the AHA’s national efforts to toughen anti-smoking legislation. He shares exciting stories and walks readers through the steps of creating and growing their own advocacy campaigns.

Chapter Ten:

Heart-to-Heart Alliances: Becoming a “Partner of Choice”

The American Heart Association has a wide range of relationships, including over 90 partnerships at the national level. In this final chapter, Wheeler shares the stories of a few of these partnerships to illustrate what it means to become a nonprofit “partner of choice”—meaning that when an organization thinks about working with another organization, yours is top-of-mind. Wheeler tells the exciting stories of the AHA’s partnership with the Clinton Foundation, Microsoft, Google and other nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Readers will learn how to create a “Strategic Alliance Value Proposition” and other tips for making partnerships succeed. After all, no organization can achieve its mission entirely alone. We all succeed when we help each other.

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