



A FIO PARTNERS PERSPECTIVE:

Our Model of Strategic Management for Nonprofit Organizations

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There are debates underway within the capacity building, and to some extent, within the academic communities concerning non-profit strategy and accountability. This debate has led to a call for the creation of a new generation of tools to support nonprofit development. We hope that our work can contribute to that debate and the evolution of these new tools.

To us, one aspect that appears to be lacking is a clear and useful conceptual framework based in the practical realities of managing a nonprofit entity that can respond to increased accountability and rapid change. This is further exacerbated by the lack of a detailed conceptual map for how a non-profit evolves through time and by the fact that, largely, capacity building models are not adjusted for different industries of the sector and spend very little effort in crafting well integrated strategy. The field, taken as a whole, tends to seek and promulgate “normative models” rather than dynamic, process oriented models. There are many, many publications that say that “Boards should ...” or “The CEO should...” as though every nonprofit in every industry or field of the sector at every stage of development has more in common than not.

One of the primary motivators that has driven our conviction that there is a need for a different approach was the recognition that most of the activity in the nonprofit capacity building world deals with building the capacity of individuals rather than organizations. Most of the effort in nonprofit capacity building is invested in training and while there are certainly many instances in which individuals attending training bring the new knowledge or skill acquired back to the workplace, there is little evidence that this way of introducing new knowledge has a significant effect on organizational

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