

3 MUST-READ TIPS TO START AND GROW YOUR NONPROFIT



A top-down view of a desk with a calculator, a cactus, a pen, and macarons. The desk is light gray. In the top left, there is a black and silver calculator. In the top right, there is a small green cactus with white spines. In the bottom left, there are two macarons, one light brown and one green. In the bottom right, there is a small green plant with white flowers. A black pen is in the bottom left. A white paper is in the top left. A white paper is in the top right. A white paper is in the bottom left. A white paper is in the bottom right.

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INTRODUCTION

Are you thinking about starting a nonprofit organization?

Nonprofit organizations can be a worthwhile addition to a community trying to address a prevalent issue. Creating one is an arduous process that can take months or even years to accomplish. You'll need time, money, and resources to build it from the ground up and even more of those things to actually deliver services.

Once you open your doors, you need to consider next steps for your fledgling nonprofit. What you decide to do in the beginning of your service delivery will directly affect your growth. So, before you see your first client, you need to make a plan and stick with it. There are countless ways to grow your nonprofit, but there are some key initiatives you need to make a priority. We've included them in this eBook, so you can get a head start on growing your nonprofit.

As you're making your growth plan, consider this question:

What can you do for your organization at the beginning to ensure it runs successfully now and can grow in the future?

Keep reading to find out.

BUILD AWARENESS FOR YOUR NONPROFIT

After you've started your nonprofit organization, it's critical to begin marketing it to your community right away to spread the word about your mission. As you market it, try to establish it as a new pillar of support for the community so people know they can come to you for service. Build your organization's reputation as a trustworthy place that can bring people from all backgrounds together. And in an increasingly fast-paced society, consider using digital methods, like social media outreach and a consistent blogging strategy, to gain support.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a powerful tactic you can use to start building your organization's reputation. Social media allows you to have open communication directly with your community and spread awareness to your mission faster than other traditional forms of media outreach. Along with that, it's a free or low-cost option for organizations, like yours, who are strapped for time and resources. You can share your message to people from different audiences and demographics that you might not be able to reach otherwise, which can maximize your reach. There are a lot of social media platforms for your organization to use. Every platform works differently, but the core feature included in all of them is the same – strategically maximizing exposure and engagement.

As a rule of thumb, talk to your followers as often as you can. But, remember – always communicate with intention to build trust with your audience. Don't simply share a brief, superficial update. If you don't convey what you're doing for the community – and, more importantly, what you're doing for the clients you're beginning to serve – people won't want to follow your story. Make sure that what you're posting is showing the personality, heart, and soul of your new organization. Once you do that, people will want to engage with your message.

WE CAN HELP!

[Visit our website](#) to get tips for starting your social media outreach.



START A NONPROFIT BLOG

It's important to be able to share your organization's message quickly and easily, and a nonprofit blog is a great place to start. Your blog should act as a hub on your website for people to learn about your nonprofit, disseminate any updates, and, share your clients' stories in an easily digestible way. You can establish your voice on a broader scale and as your mission grows, your blog can grow with it.

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Think of a nonprofit blog as a place for your community to digitally come together to start and maintain conversations. You can engage with your community through comments and encourage them to interact with you and other members of your audience, which is particularly helpful if you are trying to get more people to visit your website. And once your organization does grow, you can share insights you've gained from your service delivery and how you'll apply those lessons to future growth and development.

To maximize your blog's engagement rates, make sure to couple your blog updates with social media. When combined with social media, your blog can boost your nonprofit's web presence in a meaningful way. Instead of just sharing news or updates on social media alone, you can post them to your blog and encourage people on social media to go see your updates. This way, you'll gain followers and spread your message at the same time. As you market your nonprofit, it's essential for you to give your clients and stakeholders a place to come together. Do that by creating a space for them to interact and support you.

GET INSPIRED

Read more about how to begin marketing your nonprofit through social media and blog efforts by visiting our website today! We have a ton of resources that small nonprofits can use to grow their missions.

[VISIT OUR BLOG](#) ↗


START TRACKING YOUR SERVICE DELIVERY

Collecting and tracking data is one of the most important ways to know your nonprofit is achieving its goals, helping clients, and ultimately doing good in your community.

It allows you and your stakeholders to know how your services are interacting with your clients. And having data at your fingertips can show where your organization started and point you in the direction to which it can grow.

You started your nonprofit to solve a problem in your community and help your clients overcome that problem. It only makes sense to track data that will showcase how your clients are benefiting from your organization in the present, and how you can continue doing that in the future. It's critical for organizations of all sizes to track data, but small nonprofits track data differently than larger ones do. Small organizations deliver less service, so it's even more essential to showcase the powerful things they are doing. To really show what your nonprofit is capable of, start by tracking your outputs and, eventually, translate them into outcomes.





In the early days of your nonprofit, you're only going to be tracking outputs, or the individual data points your organization will encounter during your service delivery. You can characterize outputs as the number of beds slept in per night or the number of check-ins a person made over a period of time, for example. They are important because they log your individual interactions with clients, allowing you to collect their treatment data point by data point. Outputs eventually lead to outcomes, or the conclusions that can be drawn from the outputs you've collected over time.

Outcomes are important because they show how your interactions are affecting your clients on an organizational scale. Outcomes show the trends that result from your outputs and they can be used to make important decisions for the future.

TRACKING YOUR DATA DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A DAUNTING TASK.

Start off by tracking data that will point to any interaction you have had with your clients. Record each interaction individually. Then, as interactions start becoming more frequent, combine all the information of a specific client together. This can act as a beginning profile you can use to gather and reference information. This way, you can look back to see where your clients started and see how they have progressed through your service delivery. Your stakeholders will be looking for as much information as possible to see how your nonprofit is doing, especially in its early days. Make sure you are tracking data so they can help you grow your mission.

GROWING YOUR MISSION WITH SUPPORT AND FUNDS

Once you've gained experience marketing your new organization and tracking important data, you can start thinking about how you can leverage both for more support. New nonprofits not only need physical support by way of volunteers and additional team members, they also need financial support. This comes in two forms – generous donations from the community and grants awarded from foundations. The approach nonprofits have to take to get their attention does vary between the two, but they do value the same thing – data. Show both funders and donors that your mission is worth investing in by showing them the powerful data you've collected.

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Using Data to Gain Donations

When your nonprofit is small, it's full of passion. Your passion can be a powerful tool to use when you are trying to draw in financial support because when people can see the passion that drives you, they tend to latch onto it. Use that to your advantage when you're asking for donations from your community and couple it with the data you've collected during your service delivery.

Nonprofits ready to start fundraising effectively should be employing creative, memorable, and compelling ways to mix stories and data. Combining data and stories will help your small nonprofit in the long run because it shows a full picture of how your nonprofit is affecting your community. And people are more likely to give donations when they have that full picture.

You can do both by showing how your passion and your data work together through your clients. Their stories are important and highlighting them will show how you're not only helping them, but also the community as a whole. Stories are moving and they capture why you do what you do. And as you share their stories, use data to strengthen your message. You'll see your community become more engaged once they see stories and data alongside each other, so don't be afraid to utilize them when you're appealing to your audience.



How to Use Data to Apply for Grant Dollars

An organization can't solely rely on donations to keep their doors open, especially if it's planning on growing its mission in the future. Organizations need to have support from grants awarded by foundations or charitable trusts in order to make lasting changes. To get awarded with funds, nonprofits need to prove that they are positively impacting their communities and the key to making that happen is — data. Having strong data shows potential funders what you're doing for your clients and what gaps exist in your service delivery that their funds can help resolve.

It's easy to get discouraged when you're applying for grants because of how new your organization is. When smaller nonprofits apply for their first few grants, they likely aren't even close to measuring their overarching impact on the community, which is typically a crucial indicator of success that funders rely on during the application process. But, that's okay — it doesn't have to be in order to receive funding. Funders know the limitations small nonprofits face and they want to help get you to the next level. Use the data you do have and lay out why your organization deserves to get there.

When you're putting together your grant application, show why your nonprofit is a worthwhile investment. Pull your resources together and find out what's missing from your organization and calculate how much funding you'll need. Then, lay out what you want to resolve, how that applies to your overall mission, what outcomes you foresee getting from their funding, and all the measurable goals that will show your process. All the while, use data to back up your claims. With a comprehensive plan of action and robust data at your disposal, your nonprofit will be well on its way to getting the funds it needs to create lasting change in your community.

Explore Available Grants

There are so many grants available to your small organization and we encourage you to find the perfect ones that will grow your mission. Research and find grants that will bolster your organization by following GrantWatch. GrantWatch collects grant information for nonprofits of every size, vertical, and location, so you have the best shot of getting lucrative funding.

[GO TO GRANTWATCH](#) ↗

ENSURE YOUR SMALL NONPROFIT CAN BE SUCCESSFUL

Stay True to Your Mission

The most successful nonprofits, large or small, have one thing in common – their dedication to their mission. Your mission should be your defining characteristic. It sets you apart from other organizations that exist in your space and is what ultimately drew your clients in for service. The more you can define yourself from the crowd, the better your chances are of catching the attention of stakeholders, donors, and funders. The more you can prove how effective your mission is through marketing and data, the more support you will gain along with way. Your nonprofit is small, but your mission is powerful – let that be what guides you throughout your journey of delivering service and changing your community for the better.

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Social Solutions

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