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The Auerbach  
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Informational Report

# Managing Human Resources Effectively:

Unique Nonprofit Challenges and Ways to Overcome Them

By **Ayax Rangel & Paulina Doran**

# Human Resources Management Basics: What all nonprofits need to know

“Since the employees selected can impact performance, nonprofits must be conscientious about their employment procedures and staffing choices.”



When conducting major operations and fulfilling mission goals, nonprofits must be conscientious about their employment procedures and staffing choices, since the employees selected can impact organizational performance and success. From 2008 to 2014 the publication *NonProfit HR* found that the number of employees in nonprofits increased

by over 49% and that over 10.7 million individuals were employed in this sector <sup>(1)</sup>. This means that the nonprofit field will likely have to hire more individuals and fill more positions in the future.





Very simply, a nonprofit is a form of a business and it must have a business mindset. And just like for-profit businesses, nonprofits depend on staff to implement developed plans and assist in growing the group sustainably.

Many NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) are evidently failing at this pursuit. According to CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, thousands of nonprofit staffers reported that they were discontent with how their leaders supervised their performance and provided training to help them advance in their professional skills <sup>(2)</sup>. Typically, these employees scarcely were even given guidance or supervisor instruction to aid them in completing job assignments effectively. Furthermore, over 70% soundly or fairly agreed that they were expected to complete an excessive workload, which led to stress and fatigue over the course of daily operations.

The term “human resources” encapsulates several specific concerns. For example, a nonprofit’s leadership or HR department may have to evaluate the major requirements of employees to ensure their job is carried out effectively <sup>(3)</sup>. They also have to determine the most efficient hiring methods and screening techniques to pick the person who best fits the role to be filled.

Furthermore, HR involves training and preparing new staff members during their initial employment stages so that they understand the environment they will be working in and the goals or mission of the affiliated nonprofit. Lastly, HR issues also focus on payments, salaries and benefits.

Hiring or placement also entails matching individuals with the capabilities to take on a position and ensuring their passion and desire to help fulfill the organization's larger mission. It also involves constructing job descriptions with a clear, accurate qualifications and abilities for key positions so that operations run smoothly and all employees understand what is anticipated from them.

Promoting job positions via digital media and within other nonprofits may be a part of the engagement effort to get candidates to apply. In addition, proper selection will require carrying out well-organized, cost-effective interviews to speak to both paid staff and volunteers, in an effort to appeal to the most experienced and competent individuals.





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The process of screening and analyzing applicants includes evaluating their work history and aligning their professional experience with the title's standards, duties, and needs. This allows an HR recruiter to objectively judge a person's competencies, opinions, and knowledge over pertinent subject matter. The recruiter can also evaluate whether candidates wish to join for a positive reason -- to enhance their career or to assist in a larger organizational purpose -- or a negative reason -- to leave another workplace.



Insights into human resource functions ensures that a nonprofit can utilize its personnel resourcefully and effectively, that hiring and potential firing can be carried out properly, that staff can be allocated by needed assignments, and that raises can be based on positive evaluations. These assessments also ensure that the organization has sufficient staff for present and future plans.





Efficient HR analysis also evaluates the amount of work past staff members have been given, the HR practices in other or similar NGOs, staff requirements for key campaigns and programs, financial resources available for key plans, and the value or number of the current applicants available. Efficient HR methods can reduce staffing costs by thousands of dollars and save nonprofit start-ups large amounts of money.



# What should be emphasized in human resources policies?

Determining what HR policies should include can be difficult but should be driven by fairness and motivation. All HR plans should emphasize employee safety and protection and should enact regulations to prevent sexual and physical harassment <sup>(4)</sup>.

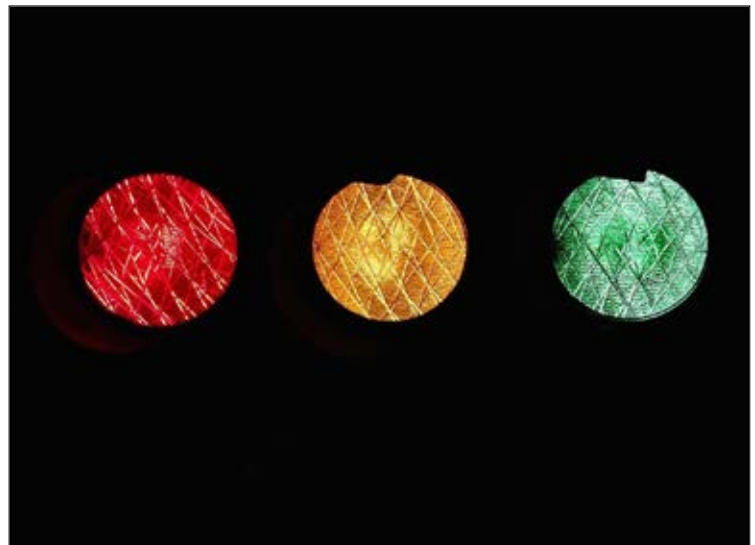
Employee recruiting, screening and placement should emphasize equality and protection, no matter each person's gender identity, race, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, etc. To ensure professional equivalency, everyone should have the same rights and privileges in the workplace. In addition, policies should clarify what suitable conduct looks like in day-to-day operations and provide a moral code that guides employees. This code showcases that the organization truly cares about its image and reputation, which helps gain trust among both internal staff and external clients.





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In other ways, any conflict of interest guidelines should be emphasized very transparently and clearly. In this way, staff will know when they are required to disclose particular connections with professional entities as well as information on how ethically to conduct dealings that may involve conflicts. Associated documentation should allow employees and volunteers to certify their awareness of this type of agreement and note their conflict of interests. It may also be pertinent to inform staff how to relay any infringements of policies, awareness of staff breaking the law, as well as the proper course of action to deal with these issues.





Nonprofits' compensation guidelines should clearly state any procedures to pay directors and staff. It is important to map out when salaries will be paid; how they compare to other organizations' in the nonprofit sector; and benefits for health insurance, vacation, illness and paid time off.

Most HR documents also must clearly present standards about maintaining documents and records associated with one's position, while also establishing how and when any notes, memos, or paperwork must be destroyed. Typically, these procedures follow routines used by similar nonprofits and laws for a particular region.

Training and orientation can also be established in written HR policies by creating a manual about the culture and values of the organization; the benefits staff will receive; and the moral, ethical, and legal guidelines they must follow. Staff members should sign a statement that verifies they have read the manual, understood the major points, and approved the standards set.





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## Setbacks in HR management.

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In a nonprofit environment, devoting proper attention toward human resources can be difficult. Money and finances allocated to HR may be extremely restricted, especially compared to for-profit companies'. Therefore, some organizations may feel that HR is an unnecessary expense or that funding is too scarce to worry about it.

However, in an industry where missions matter and underlying staff performance can make or break meeting crucial objectives -- such as pulling in donations or funding, -- not paying attention to human resources can really worsen budget limitations <sup>(5)</sup>. HR is important to retain capable talent so that operations can run smoothly and monetary assets can grow in spite of individuals with poor work ethic and performance.







In addition, in the nonprofit field it is common for employees and staff to receive lower wages and salaries than in other industries. And that can make individuals become discontent with their compensation and their ability to excel professionally. When nonprofit wages and salaries do not meet the standards of for-profit companies, some potential applicants may refuse open positions and the nonprofit will likely miss out on experienced, qualified talent.

In order to retain current staff and attract the best candidates for future positions, it is highly important to determine fair wages and integrate them into a structured compensation plan. Job descriptions of intended compensation and differentiating between titles such as volunteer, intern, and employee are also important to ensure individuals know their status, are properly classified by the government and are offered the appropriate payment.

Furthermore, it can be common for nonprofit organizations to overwork their staff and not recognize the importance of work-life balance. In these situations, staff are expected to produce outcomes much greater than they can personally handle or feel that their superiors do not appreciate them. According to a survey by *Nonprofit HR*, 19% of nonprofits find that disproportionate job assignments and lack of the means to accomplish tasks is one of the most disconcerting difficulties of HR <sup>(1)</sup>.

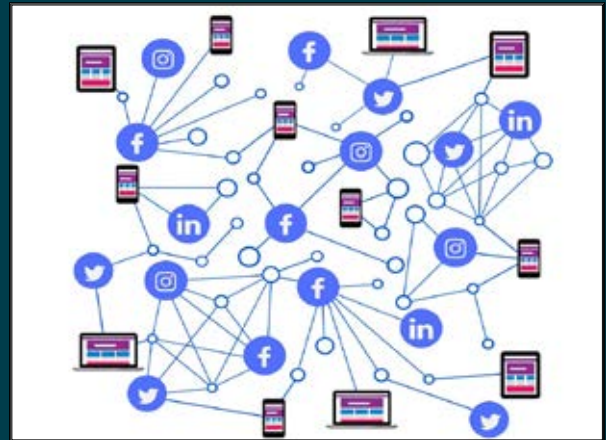


Without considering these problems, the nonprofit work atmosphere may become hectic and tense, and cause employees to leave due to their low job satisfaction. Discontented staff may be looking for more free time and balance in their day-to-day work life and keen to find another position that supports that goal <sup>(5)</sup>.

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Giving higher regard to human resources can ensure that the nonprofit environment promotes employee happiness while also connecting them to the underlying organizational goals. Staff regard for the nonprofit mission may keep them more dedicated to the work and prevent turnover. Employees' happiness may also make pay discrepancies or lower salaries more acceptable because their dedication to the mission overrides their need for rapid professional progression.



Most nonprofits simply devote insufficient labor and time to recruitment efforts <sup>(1)</sup>. For example, a little over 30% of nonprofits struggle with locating competent staff and 68% lack any kind of plan to post their job listings on social media platforms. Though many organizations (70% from 2012 to 2015) are using LinkedIn to find contracted, part-time, and full-time employees, only 53% are utilizing Facebook and even less (26%) have Twitter accounts dedicated to HR functions. These gaps show that social media usage is still lacking and that nonprofits may be losing out on applicants and opportunities because of their decision to not use more online recruiting platforms.

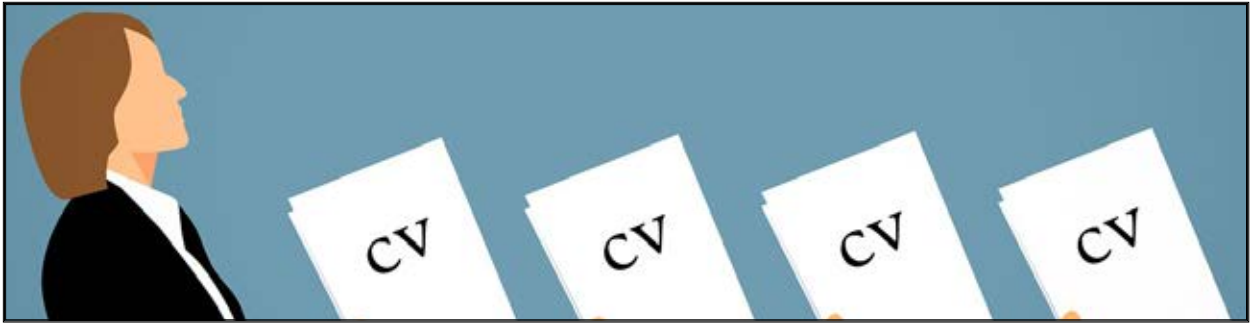


“many nonprofits have trouble retaining their own staff and progressing them into positions of more seniority...”



Furthermore, many nonprofits have trouble retaining their own staff and advancing them into positions of more seniority. This is especially true in the areas of direct services and program management where 38% of nonprofits said they were losing staffers in the former sector and 18% said they were losing staffers in the latter <sup>(1)</sup>. These problems are mainly associated with a lack of employee development; many individuals find that career progression is not possible in many nonprofit positions and choose to move on to other industries or job offers.





In many ways, social media recruitment and internal advancement are put on the backburner. Over 91% of organizations employed their friends or coworkers from other associations, which showcases that most nonprofits rely on this method excessively to the point that they are limiting themselves and the potential of their staff <sup>(1)</sup>.

Another challenge for HR departments is ensuring that they follow government regulations to keep their tax-exempt status. For example, independent contractors must only receive payment solely for tasks and duties related to the organization and with no benefits. Doing the opposite constitutes fraudulent or unethical activities and could cost the organization its reputation and its status as a nonprofit.



In another aspect of HR, it may be simply hard to build human resources policies to their full potential, ensuring that they are really benefiting the whole company<sup>(2)</sup>. For

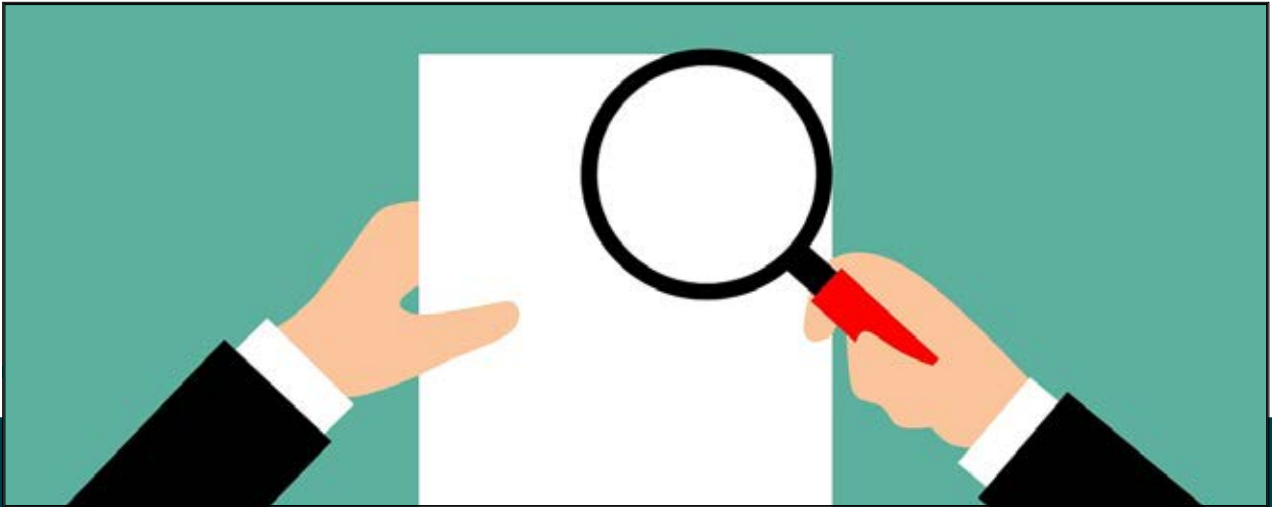
example, many designates who are working on HR functions may have very little competency in that subject matter. When you do not have a dedicated HR department, you must enlist individuals from other departments and in other roles to multi-task for the organization's benefit.

In other words, employees with little expertise and aptitude in HR are expected to make calls that they are unfit to make, while also accomplishing their own diverse assignments. In fact, the organization of CompassPoint reported in a survey of 400 nonprofits that only 15% had HR leadership, emphasizing the scarcity of limited talented professionals in this area.



Furthermore, nonprofit leaders such as executive directors, who oversee all operations, may also not have the ability to proactively attend to HR matters, putting them on the back burner for someone else to deal with. In general, executive directors often have to prioritize financial payments, reserves for employee wages, and financial stability over HR issues.

To prove this point, the consultancy Accenture reported that not even four out of ten nonprofit executives feel that recruiting and retaining talented employees is an urgent contemporary concern. Other issues such as advancing staff-wide skills, providing continual education and competency building, and increasing functional success of volunteers and employees were ranked as even less important. Instead, donations and fundraising were the most important matters, detracting attention even farther from HR functions.



However, this demonstrates that instead of relying on current staff, a major HR issue could be abated by simply hiring out when possible and finding HR experts to use their skills and abilities to benefit a nonprofit. According to the Taproot Foundation and United Way of the Bay Area, over a million individuals throughout the United States have HR qualifications that could be of use to NGOs.

For example, some consultants assist with onboarding employees and helping them learn new skills. Other experts are highly proficient in methods that can improve the hiring, finding, selecting and onboarding processes. Still other professionals focus on constructing and implementing fair and standardized compensation and benefit plans. Thus, the major challenge of inexperienced staff doing HR functions can be easily resolved by using the talents of outside contractors.



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Most nonprofits agree with this solution. The Taproot Foundation and United Way of the Bay Area found that over 86% claimed they had at least one HR challenge that they believed could absolutely or possibly be fixed with outside staff and independent contractors, showing the definite need for this type of solution <sup>(2)</sup>. More positive results and estimations have shown that the available assets of external services in the for-profit world could in fact fill an annual gap of \$250 million when it comes to needed HR functions for the nonprofit industry <sup>(2)</sup>.

Another stifling issue is the mass decline in consistent governance of nonprofit organizations. Older nonprofit executive directors in recent years have been retiring from their positions due to age, while positions are opening up rapidly with little attention to successors with the needed skills and abilities.



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In addition, accelerated growth in the nonprofit arena with many competing organizations and larger groups with more complicated structures, make it more challenging and demanding to take on leadership roles. Potentially, 640,000 governance, director and administrative positions may be unfilled and will require applicants in the next decade, demonstrating again that in the coming years, the hiring rate will not meet the firing and unemployment rate.







Having rapid turnover of leadership positions and empty roles with no qualified candidates to fill them can be extremely damaging to organizations that require skilled staff to help implement strategy and ensure efficient performance. Without a capable executive director, a nonprofit lacks the insight and wisdom to make responsible decisions.

NGOs also are deprived of having a motivated leader who is enthusiastic about the organizational aims and about serving a larger community. Often, no one can replace these leaders who lack detailed and comprehensive plans to guide transitions and have few educational resources available to prepare junior staff for senior positions.

# Strategies for improving an NGO's HR functions.

When first reworking how an organization approaches its HR operations, it is most helpful to consider the values of one's nonprofit and whether it is consistently modeling those values (6). A successful organization and its leaders consider their employees' valuable assets, treat their employees with utmost respect, and align their treatment with the nonprofit's larger purpose and image. In many ways, HR can make or break the success of an organization. Nonprofits that fail to focus on HR will always be at an disadvantage compared to those that do.

One way to incorporate nonprofit values and expectations into a work environment is to start with hiring and recruiting. Posting jobs that explain and review the work atmosphere and expected conduct is beneficial.. NGOs should also ask themselves what they need out of employees and what skillsets will most likely help them accomplish mission goals.

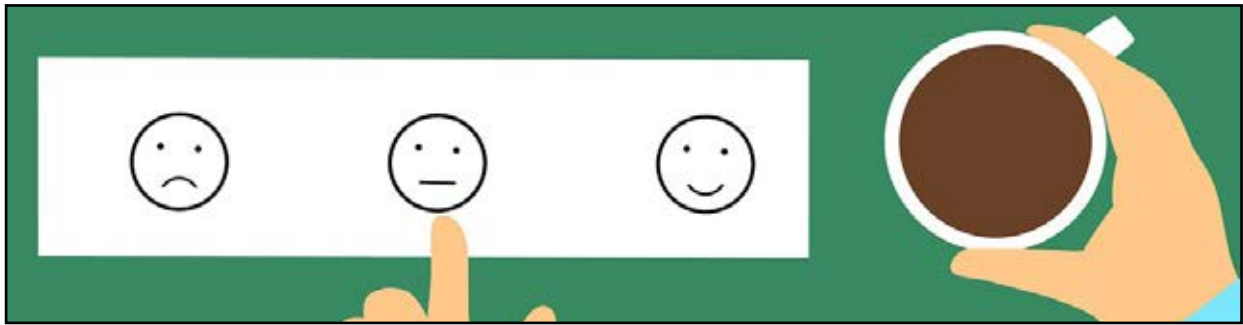


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Position requirements should not be so exclusive, specific or complicated that they make competent individuals look elsewhere. Although a college education can be helpful, a nonprofit should look at candidates’ experience and skills over diplomas and certificates. Ultimately, applicants will apply their professional experience over their academic knowledge.

Evaluating staffers’ success in accomplishing goals is equally important. Employees should understand how their efforts contribute to solving particular problems, carrying out broad initiatives, and attaining positive mission-related outcomes.





Managers should provide their employees with negative or positive evaluations so as to open lines of communication about any areas of needed improvement. Finally, evaluations should provide concrete examples of behavior that led to particular outcomes, since specific actions are more helpful than generalities.

It is important to consider payments and salary in reference to the needs of a particular nonprofit vs. just assessing broad market trends. While trends are worth noting, nonprofits should more highly rate retaining excellent staff over a long term. However, leaders should also evaluate whether they need to retain committed employees instead of short-term staffers, and the pay provided to each employee type.



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Nonprofits should also consider whether they want to pay higher salaries based on seniority or whether they want to pay all holders of the same position title equally. Organizations may also prioritize some functions of their mission (fundraising, marketing, administration, etc.) over others, and pay more to staffers in more crucial departments if their impact on the core objectives is greater.

Employees who work longer hours or who have a unique skill (such as competency of multiple languages) may also deserve higher salaries and wages. These are all HR decisions that must reflect the values of a group. Compensation plans should align with the values of the organization and match what each believes is equitable to better the world, ensuring that disparities between upper-level positions and lower-level positions are minimalized or at least rationalized.



HR procedures can also impact organizational culture because some policies can communicate specific messages to staff. For example, is the amount of time for medical leave congruent with the values of the nonprofit? If policies prevent staff from taking off, they may think that their nonprofit's helping the community is more important than its treatment of employees.

In other ways, ensuring that employees are helped when required and fully championed (through positive reinforcement) can also show that leadership is creating humane, positive policies that treat all stakeholders similarly, reflecting the nonprofit's values. Moreover, giving higher management opportunities to educate themselves, build their competencies, and understand mission objectives will ensure that the outside face of the NGO reflects a demeanor and set of attitudes that promote organizational principles and standards.



“Employee recruitment, selection, education, and compensation planning in the long-run make leadership roles simpler and more defined.”

Nonprofit leaders should recognize that these functions are not supplementary but necessary. Putting the time and labor into recruiting, hiring, training, and fairly compensating shows that an organization is diligently looking out for its beneficiaries' and donors' best interests. Without these structures in place, an organization becomes more consumed with fixing past errors, getting out of problematic situations that were avoidable, and habitually resolving issues that are repeating.

By not focusing on HR strategic planning, nonprofit leaders actually take on more work. Thus, employee recruitment, selection, education, and compensation planning in the long-run make leadership roles simpler and more defined.





Another part of HR strategy involves getting the board of directors to participate and understand their accountability in developing and organizing an HR department or initiative. Many boards often fail to put this concern to the forefront. Board members should never be in the dark when it comes to understanding the realities of HR or be inactive in its planning. Their lack of involvement may have major legal repercussions if something were to go wrong. Instead, executive directors and other leaders should broadcast to their boards these potential risks, provide them with incentives for participating, and build a case that supports capacity building in the realm of HR.

Organizations thus should list and record any ideas for human resources in a straightforward and uncomplicated manner, where each group on the board is consulted and provides its own input. Any tasks and implementation procedures should be delineated and mapped out.

Next, a board should explore free and paid resources that offer research-supported techniques which could be applied in a nonprofit context. When planning for leadership transitions, it is wise for nonprofits to document methods in recruiting and onboarding executives or CEOs, so that all members agree about future hires. The same applies in developing evaluations to gauge functional success and training techniques. All usable measures and instructional methodologies should be accessible to directors to use at their convenience.



In relation to training, the board and senior executives should instill in stakeholders that competency building is vital to growth and sustainability. All leaders and staff, as appropriate, should understand the significance of educating themselves in unfamiliar subjects and sharing their knowledge with their counterparts across branches.

Ongoing education and widespread training should occur both in and outside the office. Managers and staff should also be active in contacting other organizations, businesses, educational institutes, and consultants with similar missions and ideologies who can share facts and data that can be applied to a nonprofit realm.

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Other leaders should find these entities so that networking opportunities are easy to reach for professional development. For example, nonprofit managers can bring experts to an organization’s main office, purchase instructional reference materials for online viewing, retrieve free reports and guides from digital sources, and include multiple businesses and organizations in a training seminar. These actions deliver educational products and experiences straight to one’s staff collaboratively. These all show that an organization cares about its hires and wants to see them grow their careers professionally for personal and mission fulfillment. These actions also typically are not very expensive but do require a little bit of time to locate and implement.

Finally, in building knowledge of HR throughout the organization, it can be helpful to orient employees about how HR is conducted in different industries and how similar policies can be adapted to nonprofits. As a whole, most people who did not study this specialty sorely lack HR qualifications. Some require more advanced training, others may desire to only attain beginner skills, but all can benefit from learning more.







There are several options in presenting human resource guidance to staff. Organizations can hire a formal officer or specialist who could teach basic HR concepts. HR professionals can advise on how to incorporate diversity into recruitment, how to plan for transitional phases when leadership shifts, how to differentiate policies between paid staff and volunteers, how to decipher labor laws that highlight key compliancy rules, how to reduce turnover, and many other issues. These include selection, placement, salary and wages structure, policy building, and evaluation tools. These “classes” are typically physical sessions that individuals sit in on or attend in a predetermined location but they can also be conducted through video conferencing.

Leadership may also have its own developed content and program of study concerning HR. These summarize major points of interest and give actionable plans to resolve potential issues based on the type of people in the organization that might be using them. These pre-developed programs can be spread throughout each department, encouraging individuals to talk about the materials and see how they can be applied in their own work environments.





In addition, nonprofits can encourage their staff to interact in digital support forums with others dealing with similar concerns to find unique approaches to complex matters. Websites with self-help manuals and discussion boards can help develop specialized skills, where little money is spent for large gain and no transportation is required to be a part of the learning experience.



# Incorporating technological resources into HR strategy.

Implementing technology into one's HR strategy can yield optimal results. However, nonprofits often neither know of the programs and software available to them nor how to use it for specific objectives. This is especially true when it comes to HR technology, websites, and applications. Staff members are often used to going without them to accomplish any HR functions because leaders and the board may not want to invest in paid tools or subscriptions <sup>(8)</sup>.

In fact, many organizations are still working with dated spreadsheets when trying to keep track of job candidates and often rely on only hard copies of resumes when recruiting at conferences, events and college fairs. Others only use email to sort resumes from applicants into labeled files.





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These traditional methods of dealing with HR often make the process complicated for the recruiter and harder or less efficient for the applicant. Mix ups may occur when matching a position with the proper applicant and legal requirements may be harder to meet due to a lack of certainty about who applied to which job. Sorting through a messy pile of documents left on a random desk can be time consuming. These problems could easily be negated by allowing applicants to apply online with a pre-formulated application, submitting their resumes with the click of a button, and your keeping all files together and organized in one place.





There are a plethora of business-oriented reasons why a nonprofit should integrate technology into its HR plan. These reasons reduce potential costs and ensure organizational success. To begin, HR technology allows a nonprofit to maintain its reputation and control its branding online. Technology also allows a nonprofit to maximize its recruiting potential and expands its ability to connect to people globally.

For example, social networking and emailing can benefit nonprofits because they permit staff to connect with potential applicants or contact candidates in their network about job openings and volunteer positions. Many platforms allow individuals to post about their nonprofit positions and accumulate information on applications, helping with hiring decisions. Not utilizing these types of services can make the difference between standing out among counterparts or failing to attract much needed talent.



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In addition, integrating a program that manages and monitors the candidates’ submitted information can be very efficient. In this way, candidates can input their resumes, list experience, and answer application questions by going directly to the NGO’s website. They can also see a webpage with the logo of the non-profit, maintaining brand consistency. In addition, QR cards directing an applicant to a particular website can help ensure that applicants who show up to in-person career events can finish the application process at home. This helps recruit the most dedicated staff who connect with the organization’s mission, Home-completed applications also save recruiters time; they narrow down serious applicants instead of scrutinizing hundreds of candidates who may have no investment.



“Applicant tracking systems are helpful because a single administrator with login access can match sought positions with applications.”



Using computerized systems for HR functions can ensure that department managers have more control over the recruiting and vetting processes, and can communicate with other sectors in the organization to fill open vacancies <sup>(9)</sup>. Applicant tracking systems are helpful because a single administrator with login access can match sought positions with applications and streamline new hires' orientation

with quick collection tools that require fewer emails and allow one-on-one, paperless interaction.





Automated tracking systems monitor job postings of other departments and forward potential candidates to those managers. These platforms facilitate easy exchanges and interactions.

Similarly, these systems give recruiters more independence when selecting applicants and allow applicants to understand clearly how the process works. Such systems reduce staff HR functions, freeing staff to complete more urgent matters. They also ensure quick and seamless staff communication and reduce lengthy wait times of documentation between two people. Instead, applicants can complete tasks themselves without assistance and input information quickly, and HR staff can approve contracts with electronic signatures.

Technology can also be cheaper and more cost effective than many professionals in the industry believe. Compared to working with electronic tools, using larger numbers of staff to carry out HR functions can be time-consuming and costly and offer limited operational success. HR software ensures that tasks are quick and effortless, boosts productivity and reduces outside hiring of expensive HR specialists, all of which foster operational efficacy. Thus, these programs actually allow a nonprofit to do other and supplementary tasks with a smaller amount of resources.



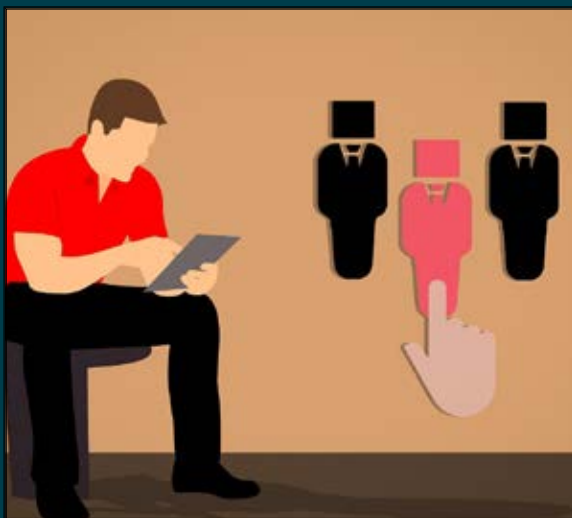
Digital programs are also advantageous because they allow managers to speak to their staff and new hires in the same way that they interact with clients and donors. For the best organizational results, technology can help staff understand the nonprofit's mission, the steps to achieve goals, and how external and internal interactions typically occur. New hires become fully connected to the group from the time they start their job.





HR software ensures that candidates have a favorable impression of the company and have a quicker learning curve with the necessary resources available to them.

Using technology shows that a nonprofit is innovative, that it seeks smooth user experiences and that its eco-measures leave a smaller carbon footprint on the world. HR software also reduces new employees' concerns, helps integrate them into the nonprofit's work environment and makes orientation less monotonous and problematic. As tasks are productively completed with technology, new employees can better execute mission aims, aid their communities, and use their quickly acquired training to communicate objectives to clients and stakeholders.



A vast number of HR functions can be streamlined with digital technology. One major function is recruiting and finding applicants. When using an application that connects people all over the world, an NGO attracts candidates with different experiences, personality types, nationalities, races, and more. Further, these applications ensure that recruiting is more cost effective and that less money is spent overall. Finding people online means that you can locate candidates quicker and lessen the financial outlay for each new position. Moreover, NGOs using recruiting platforms attract more experienced and qualified people, while also projecting a clear image of the personality and spirit of their organization.

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Typically, reliance on recruiting technology makes a nonprofit look more modern and advanced, which increases its appeal to applicants. It also ensures that many decisions on new hires are more fair and unbiased, while easing access for all candidates. Furthermore, a webpage designed to attract potential hires is also a great place to promote a less familiar NGO and convince candidates that yours is the correct work environment for them.

Other options for recruitment technology are platforms such as CareerBuilder and Monster. These job boards are not specific to a niche industry but they allow marketing to a larger population. Websites are also available for certain fields and specific regions, so listings can be tailored and sent out to a particular targeted audience.

Using these websites and digital platforms leads to pivotal organizational gains. In fact, according to a HR survey conducted by Johnson and Gueutal, over 37% of nonprofits reported the highest gains from HR software assets allocated to recruitment compared to other methods.



Other types of digital platforms that can revolutionize HR functions are those that help select qualified applicants. Available programs also help HR staff determine the top person for a particular job, considering major competencies and abilities to represent the organization in client and stakeholder transactions.



In many ways, these tools ensure that the selection process is highly precise and that all local and national laws are abided by. They also ensure that data of how candidates are chosen can be analyzed. Over all, these programs ensure that NGOs spend less time and money, that all individuals hired meet any predetermined regulations within the work culture, and that assessments can be distributed remotely and to any location via the web.



In terms of testing, these applications help determine whether tests given to candidates are valid and reliable. They also collect information and data about users of the program and their results. These insights can be used by HR staff to chart whether a particular assessment is valuable or beneficial, whether it accurately forecasts future outcomes, and whether a candidate is likely to stay with the organization. In many ways, tests can prevent applicants from getting tired during a test, as well as judge whether questions are too simple or difficult to be useful. Test programs also usually leave test takers fairly satisfied with their experience, since most applicants understand how to use the web and have sought other positions in a similar way.

“Electronic learning is a new technique that many organizations are switching to due to its wide availability and economic features.”



Another method that nonprofit professionals must consider is making their educational materials available online. A plethora of internet programs on diverse subjects can send course material straight to a new hire via email or another preferred way. Electronic learning is a new technique that many organizations are switching to due to its wide availability and economic fea-

tures. In fact, over 60% of nonprofits studied by Johnson and Gueutal already have an electronic education curriculum. Electronic teaching is the cheapest way to conduct instructive sessions, and often can save users over 50% of the funds that would have been spent on traditional teaching methods and in-person classes.







In other ways, electronic learning ensures that applicants have full autonomy in structuring their professional and educational sessions with experts. Applicants and employees can watch seminars or read important documents in any place and at any time, whether at home or in the work environment. Electronic learning also ensures that employees are not wasting time commuting to course locations when they could be completing important work assignments or spending time with their family. Tech helps establish important boundaries between professional and personal aims, so that employees do not feel that learning is cutting into their free time.

In other ways, managers can easily monitor and keep up-to-date with their employees and their progress in completing essential components of their jobs. For example, some industries, including the non-profit world, must provide instruction to their employees to ensure they comply with legal policies and regulations.



In this case, managers can easily use technology to see whether staff have finished courses and what objective is next. This prevents managers from providing the same courses to people who have already completed them or bothering employees who are on schedule with their training requirements about their status. This is especially important for organizations that require ethics training for research, want to prevent harassment in the workplace, or have medical processes that must be followed exactly for client safety.

These tasks can usually be handled with a Learning Management System or Learning Content System. The former is an economical option that provides managers with straightforward tools to implement and monitor training, where employees sign onto accounts, can reserve spots for instructional sessions, and see who else will be attending. This allows staffers to control their own competency building.



“ Informational networks in the form of blog posts, forums or keyword pages can also be utilized, so that employees can search for topics and subject matter they are struggling with...”

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A learning content system ensures that all information available to employees is in one single location, so that they can find helpful materials that are only accessible by them and take the classes provided to them. Informational networks in the form of blog posts, forums or keyword pages can also be utilized, so that employees can search for topics and subject matter they are struggling with and can help with their operational processes.

Another aspect of HR functions that can be carried out electronically are performance management duties. In the modern world, nonprofits need information on how their employees are doing and their progress on key tasks. Data collection with a tech system about certain measures can help with this pursuit, while also ensuring that managers or executive directors are connected to their employees to help them improve and ensure that evaluations are sent to the individuals who require them.

Performance management technology ensures that all leaders are able to look at the up-to-date data collected whenever they choose. That can help them offer comments, advice or criticism promptly to the recognized staff members. In addition, performance technology allows staff members to understand how their particular actions have resulted in certain outcomes so they can improve based on the data collected. This technology also ensures that all data is unbiased and is useful when making operational changes. Leaders then are far less likely to fixate on staff members' irrelevant conduct or personality traits that may be unconnected to performance.

One of the biggest bonuses of using electronic assessment data is to inform choices and give rationale behind a strategy. Any assessment data can easily be analyzed to determine salary, to decide who should receive key career tasks, and to uncover whether a staffer may require educational resources.

Lastly, compensation can be handled within any HR portal. Salaries and wages can typically be automated, so that payout is quick. Many of these programs also advise users in constructing or executing a fair compensation plan and in delivering payment amounts. To keep staffers in the loop, any changes to a plan can be sent out widely to the people it affects. Management and workers can also monitor when they have been paid in the past. Automated compensation also eases calculations for insurances, bonuses and overtime.



Some examples for smaller nonprofits include PayCycle by Intuit, which monitors benefit packages, overviews payout dates, and keeps demographic data <sup>(10)</sup>. PayCycle easily connects with accounting software, and ranges from \$20 to \$79 a month based on the package's features. PayChoice by Sage also is a beneficial option for managing direct payments, calculating deductions for unpaid staff, and submitting tax info to the government. Its self-service package is \$49.95 per month.

This kind of tech ensures the all data is accessible by anyone in the organization, so that people can easily see what they should be paid. Such technology also ensures that leaders and board members can participate in the payment structure due to these systems' ability to customize information.

Furthermore, these applications can track compensation of people in similar positions outside the organization, so that employees can monitor where they fall compared to others in a particular industry or field. These checks encourage organizations to be fair in their salary plans and to make changes due to the cost of living.

With this, staffers and managers can see whether compensation is lacking and amend any structural deficits in these plans. Making salaries more competitive helps with hiring and firing as well as retains talented staff, reducing their temptation to go to other employers.

Programs like these also ensure that salaries are closely tied to a person's skillset, to the worth of the person's position in the organization, and to functional outcomes. Compensation programs can evaluate whether raises or cuts have influenced performance and can also justify rational payment disparities.







Finally, electronic compensation methods tend to be more cost-effective and reduce the labor costs to perform this HR function. For example, the company Dell was able to reduce the time allotted to structuring salaries, formulating a policy in three weeks rather than eight weeks and allocating the savings to other needed concerns. In many ways, electronic compensation software helps nonprofits compete with their counterparts; technology makes nonprofits far more successful.

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## About the authors:

### Ayax Rangel



Ayax is a foreign language professor at the Defense Language Institute in Fort Bragg, NC. In this capacity, he imprints language and cultural competence on Special Operations Forces Soldiers of the US Army. Himself a war veteran with seven years of military service, he was honorably discharged in the fall of 2017 with an exemplary record. In his last role, Ayax was responsible for managing a portfolio that included: personnel recovery, training procurement, foreign language readiness, and equal opportunity for 1st Battalion, Psychological Operations (PSYOP), US Army, assigned to South America as its primary area of responsibility. Associated duties required constant vigilance of political developments abroad and assessment of threats posed to fellow deploying service members.

Other assignments within the organization include an overseas deployment to the US Embassy in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, as a program manager for a PSYOP team and a rotation in 5th Battalion PSYOP, requiring military training in Asian regional studies and Chinese Mandarin.

Before his arrival to PSYOP, Ayax deployed as an Infantryman on a combat tour to Kandahar, Afghanistan in the summer of 2012 as part of Operation Enduring Freedom with the 3rd Infantry Division.

Ayax has further distinguished himself as an active member of his community. He currently serves in the NCPTA Board of Directors (2018-2020 term), in the Resource Development, Governing Documents, and Executive Committees, and has been appointed a Human Relations Commissioner for the City of Fayetteville, NC (2018 - 2020 term). In 2018, Ayax received the honor of being selected to the Fayetteville Observer's 40 under 40 for distinguished community service.

He is also a volunteer at the Auerbach Global-Impact Foundation (AGIF), a nonprofit. As Director of Research some of his duties include developing plans of action, conducting target audience analyses, producing reports and targeted messaging, training and supervising staff, and collaborating with the Executive Director on strategy and delivery.



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## Paulina Doran



Paulina is a recent graduate from Drury University, who received her Bachelor of Arts in psychology and writing. During her time in academia, she facilitated a support group for clients with chronic illness and physical disabilities at Circle on the Square, a holistic life center and mental health facility, using therapeutic coping techniques from positive psychology. She was also vice president and secretary of her local Sigma Tau Delta chapter.

Currently, she is a fellow at The AGIF, who assists the research department in collecting data for their library of tools and resources geared toward marketing, leadership, human resources, strategic planning, and data management for nonprofits. She also has assisted in devising strategic marketing plans by conducting analyses for key target audiences. Her other duties include planning and implementing usability studies and surveys for website development.

In her spare time, she does independent contracting with companies like UserTesting, participating in usability tests and moderated studies for UX design, development, and research of applications and websites. In addition, she runs her own online retail and consignment store, where she resells vintage goods and inventory to the public on the Poshmark app.

In the future, she plans to eventually pursue a career in user-experience research and obtain her master's degree in human-computer interaction. She hopes to focus her studies in exploring accessible features for individuals with auditory and visual disabilities, providing them more functional tools to navigate and interact with mobile and desktop platforms.

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