



THE BONNER CONSULTING QUARTERLY

Growing Organizations, Teams, and Leaders SM

Welcome to my quarterly newsletter. Below I have included links and resources for helping to grow your organization, team, leaders, and yourself. My nonprofit friends and clients will see that I have broken out the resources specific to nonprofits, but I think you'll find some value in the other sections as well.

As always, I would appreciate your feedback about this newsletter and if you found the resources to be helpful. Feel free to forward this to a friend or colleague. Please let me know if I can be of any help to you, your organization, or your team.

Have a great summer. Be Happy Now.

Leslie Bonner

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GROWING YOUR ORGANIZATION

[Book Review of *The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else In Business*](#)

This newly released [book](#) from one of my favorite authors, Patrick Lencioni (5 Dysfunctions of a Team) strongly supports my recent presentations on how [Talent Development and Employee Engagement](#) are untapped levers for sustainability and growth. Lencioni effectively ties organizational culture, leadership team development, and clarity about strategic goals and purpose, into a comprehensive model for organizational health.

Lencioni says, "An organization is healthy when it is whole, consistent, and complete, that is, when its management, operations, strategy, and culture fit together and make sense." To build a healthy organization, the author outlines the following four disciplines: [\(Read More\)](#)

GROWING LEADERS & TEAMS

[Using Action Learning and Group Coaching to Develop Leaders](#)

I recently had a conversation with a potential client who was looking for a group coaching and leadership development plan and proposal. She asked me my dream question, "What topics would you cover with this group if you could do anything you wanted, and how would you teach them?" The resources below formed the basis of my answer about "WHAT" topics. The answer to the "HOW" was to create a monthly

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facilitated [action learning and peer coaching group](#) that would require a brief pre-reading, a simple overview of the topic, and then an action learning discussion of how it could be applied to their real-time leadership challenges.

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The Next Level

If I had to pick just one resource for leaders (and teams) on how to grow their leadership presence and competencies, I'd refer them to Scott Elbin's book, [The Next Level](#). Simple, practical tools on adapting 9 behaviors to increase personal presence, team presence, and organizational presence. In his preface, Elbin identifies the failure to adapt and break habits quickly as one of the four most common reasons leaders fail in rapidly changing situations.

Growing Adaptive Strategic Leaders

A great article from Inc, describes the [6 Habits of True Strategic Thinkers](#). Adaptive strategic leaders - the kind who thrive in today's uncertain environment - do six things well:

1. Anticipate
2. Think Critically and Question Everything
3. Interpret (seek patterns, test multiple hypothesis)
4. Decide (Balance speed, rigor, quality and agility. Take a stand even with incomplete information and amid diverse views.)
5. Align (Foster open dialogue, build trust and engage key stakeholders, especially when views diverge)
6. Learn (seek honest feedback, conduct rigorous debriefs)

GROWING NONPROFITS

5 Tips for Creating an EXECUTABLE Strategic Plan

Imagine you just spent 5 months on a strategic plan that involved an organizational assessment, surveying stakeholders, a hard won day-long retreat with board and staff, and many hours spent in creating an action plan. You breathe a sigh of relief that you can get back to dealing with the day-to-day firefight. What you, or perhaps it's your board, may not realize is that you just finished the easy part!

Now you actually need to execute the plan you created. Strategic Planning has become more of a science over the years with a pretty consistent process for creating the plan that both nonprofits and for profits can follow. But the execution of these plans is where the art, and hard work, comes into play. Here are a few tips based on the many plans I have worked on and based on Covey's [4 Disciplines of Execution](#).

1: To ensure buy-in, and increase the chance of successfully executing you must involve stakeholders in the creation of the plan. A stakeholder-centered approach means you ask for advice, listen carefully, thank the stakeholders who participate, incorporate as much of the advice as you can into your plans. Then, when the plan is completed, make sure that every stakeholder - and beyond, has access to an easy to read, prominently displayed, high quality visual map of the plan. [\(read more\)](#)

Succession Planning and Leadership Development

Recently I have been asked to present or propose to nonprofit organizations on two topics that are near and dear to me. The first is Succession Planning (Leadership Development). Most nonprofits view succession planning in one of three ways: emergency succession, defined departure planning (external hiring and transition plan),

and strategic leadership development. All three types of planning require the following:

- An understanding of the organization's current and future goals and priorities.
- A solid job description complete with skills and competencies.
- An assessment of current capacity and talent to identify gaps.
- Written operations or administrative manuals, relationships and key contacts lists, and detailed calendar of activities to ensure continuity of operations, fundraising, and leadership.
- Board agreement on, and oversight of, succession plan and processes,

While a consultant at Dewey & Kaye, I authored a study on [Nonprofit Leadership Development: A Model for Identifying and Growing Leaders](#), which (in my humble opinion) is still a great primer on succession planning and emerging leadership development. On the same subject, the Nonprofit Quarterly recently ran a great article on [How Boards Should Handle a Leadership Transition](#) that discussed the mistakes Boards make, or need to avoid, when hiring or promoting a new leader.

Develop and Engage Your Board to be More Strategic and Effective

The second topic that seems to be attracting a lot of attention lately is around Board Governance and Engagement. Several Boards have asked me to present on the topics of Board Roles and Responsibilities, with the focus on current Best Practices for becoming a more Strategic Board. Becoming strategic leads to more effective boards (in the eyes of the staff leaders) and more engaged Board members.

Speaking of more engaged Boards, I recently made a [presentation to nonprofit staff leaders about how to better develop and engage their Boards](#). The presentation draws from the most recent [Daring to Lead study](#) findings of, "The findings in this study suggest that a significant number of executives are spending too little of their time supporting and working with their boards of directors - and that executives who invest more time in the board are more satisfied with board performance. Executives should ... invest more time in partnership with the board, identifying and cultivating new board members."