



# SAC Nonprofit Experts Bulletin

Nonprofit Insights by Global Experts

August 2021

## No Money, No Mission

Guest Editor: Rebecca White

As I write, the Tokyo Olympics are underway, with incredible stories of resilience, perseverance, and the challenges of significant endeavors. Much like what we experience within the nonprofit world, but without the accolades and medalists. One of the most fascinating competitions, for me, was the women's 85-mile bike race won by solo rider Anna Kiesenhofer of Austria. A mathematician, Kiesenhofer trained methodically and ferociously. Then, on race day she attacked the course early, took the lead and never dropped back.

The Dutch team, with heavily favored Annemiek van Vleuten, lost track of Kiesenhofer in that early break away ride and didn't realize she was out far ahead. Kiesenhofer went on to win by over a minute, with silver medalist van Vleuten believing she had won the race. How can this happen? Turns out the cycling teams often rely on internal communications, including earpieces to keep up to date on road hazards and race leaders. The Olympics, however, do not allow for that type of technology and all participants know this in advance. Speaking to the Associated Press, "I'm gutted," van Vleuten said. "With five kilometers to go, ..., none of us knew if everyone was caught back. This is an example of what happens if you ride an important race like this without communication."

I agree this is what happens without communication. I would add however, this is also a cautionary tale of what can happen when you don't adapt to changing operating environments. For nonprofits, our operating environment undergoes constant change. Are you still operating in an old system or are you working to understand the impact of today's new environments? The old, yet still applicable saying is, no money, no mission. Let's start there. Have you evaluated and future proofed your revenue plan to withstand, and even thrive, in a constantly changing operating environment?

Below are ideas from four authors from around the globe with concrete ways to improve your revenue generating outcomes.



**Gail Bower**, President of [Bower & Co. Consulting](#), leads off with her [Guide to Earned Revenue](#) where she teaches organizations how to supplement philanthropic revenue with earned revenue. She and two colleagues, a nonprofit attorney and a CPA, answer your questions and show you how to get started.

No plan is complete without sustainability efforts. Don't miss Bower's article about the [Financial Sustainability Lifecycle](#) and how you can determine your organization's [Sustainability Quotient](#).



**Karen Eber Davis**, of [Karen Eber Davis Consulting](#), reminds us that your nonprofit's revenue is not solely a function of your fundraising team. Her book, *7 Nonprofit Income Streams* draws on two decades of investigation and more than 1,000 interviews with nonprofit leaders, providing readers gain clarity on the confusing and messy world of nonprofit income and new opportunities to grow their revenue.

Here's a [link to a free chapter](#) that includes an overview of nonprofit income and an exercise for your board to help them understand revenue streams.



If you are considering adding revenue generating activities like those outlined by Bower and Davis, check out this [article](#) by **Martyn Drake**, Director of [Binley-Drake Consulting](#). He helps you think creatively about opportunities.

But how do you then evaluate your options? In [this 3-minute video](#), Drake outlines an exercise you can use to make strategic revenue decisions and build consensus for your organization. BONUS: it doesn't require a feasibility study or a 10-page financial assessment.

Along with income producing activities, traditional fundraising remains a significant element in any nonprofit revenue generation plan. While overall giving was up for larger nonprofits in 2020, small [nonprofits with less than \\$1 million](#) in revenue experienced a slight decrease in revenue. Having a clear fundraising strategy that aligns with your organization's mission, capabilities, and need will be vital heading into year-end fundraising efforts.

Returning to Karen Eber Davis, her *Let's Raise Nonprofit Millions Together* offers you a framework to grow board members, staff, and others who champion—and even discover they enjoy—fundraising. Here's the [link to a free chapter](#), where you can learn how nonprofits thrive, how to engage your board, and tips on how to hire excellent development staff.

To further strengthen your fundraising strategy, look for ways to gain insight into donor and funder interests, thinking, and priorities.



In [How to Engage the 3 Distinct Types of Funders](#), **Patton McDowell**, President of [PMA Consulting](#) interviewed consultant Sybil Ackerman-Munson, who offered a fascinating assessment of the three types of donors you're likely to face - *a Sustainer, a Campaigner* and a *Launcher*. As you'll discover, their motivations are *very* different.

Patton also shared what he learned from Tom Lawrence, the President of The Leon Levine Foundation (TLLF), about three critical aspects funders like TLLF use in evaluating grant proposals like yours. Check out [Leadership, Track Record & Sustainability: How Does Your Nonprofit Stack Up?](#)

As the the 2021 Olympics wrap up on August 8, many of these same athletes are already preparing for 2024. I'm certain the Dutch team will be developing agile communication techniques to correct this year's shortcoming. **How are you working to future-proof your organizational success?**



Guest Editor Rebecca White is a nonprofit strategy, writing, and fundraising consultant who helps mission-driven organizations significantly improve their impact. You can connect with her on [LinkedIn](#) or via her [website](#).

---

The [Nonprofit Expert Community](#) is a specialist group within the [Society for the Advancement of Consulting](#), each of whom has been selected and approved for membership based on their consulting history, client endorsements, and ongoing commitment to a high standard of practice, ethics and professionalism.