In his book  Mission-Based Management , Peter Brinckerhoff identifies ten characteristics of successful nonprofits:  
  
  
  
1. Viable mission. A mission-based organization follows its mission. It needs a mission that motivates, is understandable, supportable, up-to-date and needed.  
  
2. Ethical, accountable, transparent. We are stewards of community resources. The best nonprofits are transparent in their work with an emphasis on values and ethical decision making.  
  
3. A business-like board of directors. Governing volunteers that know, understand, and pursue the organization's mission, are connected to the community, stick to policy, and are the check and balance on the staff-as well as on funders.  
  
4. A strong, well-educated staff. Any effective nonprofit needs staff who are advocates for the mission and manage from the bottom up.  
  
5. Embracing technology for mission. The best organizations embrace technology as an accelerator of good mission.  
  
6. Social entrepreneurs. Organizations that are willing to take risks to perform their mission; to try (often fail) and try again; to look at markets and provide services to support their mission.  
  
7. A bias for marketing. Organizations that understand that everything they do is marketing, and see every act as a marketing opportunity to pursue their mission.  
  
8. Financially empowered. Organizations that have diversified income, income from non-traditional sources, an endowment, and therefore, the ability to impact mission without waiting for help.  
  
9. A vision for where they are going. A strategic plan, both the process and the document, is a key to success.  
  
10. A tight set of controls. Personnel, finance, operations, media, quality control, etc. Good controls free the organization to work on its mission rather than watching its back.  
  
  
  
To register for Peter's very good (and free) monthly newsletter visit [www.missionbased.com](http://www.missionbased.com).   His other books that are recommended (with Amazon new book prices) are: Mission-Based Management, $29.94; Social Entrepreneurship, $16.41; Mission-Based Marketing, $28.82; and especially Generations (working with employees, volunteers and donors of different age groups), $27.24.