ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dan Dobin recently joined The Bridgespan Group as a Consultant after completing his MBA from the Yale School of Management in spring 2011. He currently serves as a member of YNPN’s National Board of Directors and chair of YNPN’s National Voice Committee. Before Yale, Dan spent five years in Washington, D.C. as part of College Summit’s national development and strategy teams. He has previously served as board member and co-chair of the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network of DC’s Board of Directors and co-chair of Yale School of Management’s Net Impact chapter.

Trish Tchume is proud to be serving as the first-ever Director of YNPN National after almost eight years of volunteering with the network. Prior to becoming Director in 2011, Trish served as Director of Civic Engagement for the Building Movement Project (2008-2011) and as a Campus Organizer, a Community Outreach Manager, and the Director of Training for Idealist.org (2004-2008), all following years spent doing community development work via city government and academia. Over the years, Trish has received a number of awards and recognitions for her engagement of young nonprofit professionals including her selection for the inaugural class of Independent Sector NGen Fellows in 2009.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank YNPN chapters across the country for engaging members in this initiative, specifically the chapters that provided a significant contribution to the data on which this report is based: YNPN Chicago, Central New Mexico, Denver, Twin Cities, San Diego, Washington D.C., Milwaukee, San Francisco, New York City and Boston. A special thanks goes to the five YNPN chapters who conducted in-depth qualitative research which helped bring that data to life: YNPN Cincinnati, Denver, Houston, Twin Cities and Washington, D.C.
Jim Collins’ pronouncement in Good to Great that “great vision without great people is irrelevant” has confidently emerged as a core tenet of driving strong business performance. Strategic recruitment, careful adherence to bolstering retention, and diligent professional development have become hallmarks of our country’s strongest companies. However, social sector organizational leaders, funders and the public still question why investment in talent should take the organization’s limited resources away from programmatic work. Unfortunately, strategic and comprehensive human capital management is still too often seen as a luxury among social sector organizations, including nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, public systems, and social ventures.

Social sector organizations strive to improve the lives of millions of children who face risks of poor educational, economic, social, and health outcomes. These outcomes are just as critical, if not more critical to the future of our country’s long term prosperity. We know that children’s lives will be improved with stronger organizational performance and we know that organizational performance is driven by talent. Consequently, we would be remiss if we did not ensure that the strongest talent was entering and leading the social sector. In order to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and their families, the social sector must be even more deliberate and strategic in attracting, developing, and deploying the best and brightest talent from diverse communities.

For the last fifteen years, the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network (YNPN) has grown from a one chapter, twelve person, all volunteer driven group to a 34 chapter, 30,000 member national network of mostly Millennial and Gen X individuals overwhelmingly committed to building a mission-driven career. What is the potential of harnessing and cultivating the collective talent of such a network? Can this network, with the thoughtful leadership of its first National Director working in partnership with its fully formed chapters and those yet to be dreamed, create even broader reach and contribute towards building a national pipeline of high performing, diverse talent? These questions have helped frame our decisions to invest in YNPN as a viable pipeline of talent that serves not one nonprofit organization or one geographic area, but the social sector writ large. The people’s lives that are transformed by those working in and leading the social sector deserve nothing less.

This report lifts up the voices of those that want to continue building mission-driven careers that deliver meaningful results. Good in Theory, Problems in Practice strengthens and complements the ideas being generated in the field of talent and leadership development by testing them on the ground with YNPN members and other young professionals to help stakeholders develop a better understanding of what’s working, what’s not working, and what else we must do to develop and retain high-performing, diverse talent. The Annie E. Casey Foundation’s commitment to improve the lives of our nation’s vulnerable children and families cannot be realized without key allies. We are fortunate to count YNPN as an ally in building better futures for the next generation.

Rafael López, Associate Director  
Talent and Leadership Development  
The Annie E. Casey Foundation
Leadership and change. Whether discussed together or apart, these are undeniably two of the more frequent conversation topics across the nonprofit sector. Professionals in our sector care about who is leading organizations and whether they are positioned for success in those roles. They care about changing ineffective features of our organizations and preparing for changes they see in their rearview mirror. They definitely care about social change. And yes, they also care about the change in their pockets.

Over the past decade, the sector has thought long and hard about leadership and change. We have learned that the nonprofit sector needs to anticipate an unprecedented transition at the top. Studies reported that many nonprofit leaders were planning to leave their organizations and projected a staggering number of new leaders needed to fill those roles. Other thought leaders dove deeper into the world of nonprofit executives and discovered they were frustrated with important aspects of their roles. YNPN and others also made sure the sector better understood its leadership pipeline, comprised of younger professionals from different times and backgrounds who are eager to take on more responsibility, skeptical of business as usual, and open to improving our world through any sector.

In preparing to follow up on YNPN’s own contribution to this sector-wide dialogue (Stepping Up or Stepping Out (2007)), we reintroduced ourselves to the various reports that have added important context to this ongoing conversation. As we reviewed the literature, there was one section of each study that always seemed to catch our attention: the recommendations. We had mixed feelings when reading the recommendations. On one hand, there was an impulse to get the organizations we work for and the YNPN chapters and members we represent to embrace these strategies. On the other hand, we wanted to know more. Are these the right recommendations? Are YNPN members—the emerging leaders who will eventually lead organizations implementing such strategies—excited about them? Are these strategies actually being implemented? If so, how effective are they?

These questions became the driving force behind this report. YNPN selected five of the most common recommendations put forth by nonprofit thought leaders—and we put them to the test.

POPULAR WISDOM

Although the recommendations put forth by our sector’s capacity builders have important nuances, there are also clear similarities across the proposed strategies. The set of recommendations YNPN’s National Voice Committee investigated were not only popular, but relevant to most nonprofit organizations, regardless of size or scope.

POPULAR RECOMMENDATION #1:
Nonprofits should offer more competitive compensation.
Nonprofit professionals understand their compensation will likely be lower than their peers in the private sector, but they want their compensation to be fair and relatively competitive. The literature that we reviewed purport that compensation (salary in particular) is becoming more of an issue for nonprofit professionals, which impacts the sector’s ability to both retain its current and emerging leaders and attract new talent to the sector.

POPULAR RECOMMENDATION #2:
Nonprofits should invest in building “bench strength”
As many nonprofit leaders are nearing retirement, there has been substantial discussion about the need to develop internal candidates (i.e., build bench strength). At the same time, the sector’s young talent has shown some hesitancy towards committing to their current organizations and the sector at large. Many young professionals are excited about the leadership opportunities that lie ahead, but believe they need to leave their current nonprofit, or even the sector, to advance in their careers. Nonprofits do not fill leadership openings internally as frequently as for-profit companies do and few emerging leaders feel as if they are being groomed for advancement at their organizations.

POPULAR RECOMMENDATION #3:
Nonprofits should engage in inclusive succession planning
The current pool of nonprofit leaders is approaching a large-scale professional transition, yet very few nonprofits are taking the time to plan for this inevitable leadership change. Meanwhile, waiting in the wings, is a workforce with different backgrounds (personal and professional) and views of how nonprofits should be run. These differing experiences make transparency and inclusiveness important—albeit challenging—factors to successfully taking on succession planning.

POPULAR RECOMMENDATION #4:
Nonprofits should prioritize diversity
When taking a close look at the top positions (both board and staff leadership) across the nonprofit sector, one does not see as much evidence of the commitment to inclusiveness that frequently lives in nonprofits’ missions and values. From race to gender, there are significant imbalances between those who lead nonprofits, those who make up the sector’s workforce and those who nonprofit organizations serve. If nonprofits are going to understand and help solve some of society’s toughest issues, they need to truly commit to bringing a diverse and representative set of perspectives to the table.

POPULAR RECOMMENDATION #5:
Nonprofits should move away from traditional organizational structures and chief executive roles
The CEO/Executive Director role has been explored at length as current leaders struggle with inactive boards, fundraising pressure, personnel issues and work-life balance. Young professionals notice this strain—and it is scaring off some of the sector’s best young talent from wanting to take on these roles in the future. Some of this strain has been linked to nonprofits’ hierarchical structure, which can inhibit collaboration and isolate decision-making. Young professionals believe that flatter, more nimble organizations can help increase transparency and share responsibility—and make their future leadership roles in the sector more sustainable.

2 Leadership Development and Leadership Change, (Building Movement Project)
OUR APPROACH
YNPN developed a series of questions that when answered would help us better understand the impact each of these often-cited recommendations was having on emerging nonprofit leaders and the organizations they represent.

Are young nonprofit professionals excited about the strategy’s potential for impact?
Are the nonprofits they work at currently implementing the strategy?
If implemented, what specific tactics are organizations embracing?
If implemented, are the strategies having their intended impact?
How involved are young professionals in the planning and implementation of the strategy?

We also asked participants to make some hypothetical decisions. More specifically, we were interested in understanding how young professionals prioritized these strategies against one another when handed the kind of budget constraints that many nonprofits face.

These questions became the focus of YNPN’s 2011 National Voice Survey. The survey was circulated by YNPN chapters and a mix of local and national peer organizations to over 30,000 nonprofit professionals across the country—some YNPN members, some not. The findings presented in this report reflect over 1,100 individual responses to YNPN’s National Voice Survey. Our sample included nonprofit professionals with an extremely diverse set of professional interests and experiences but demographically trended white, well-educated and female.

The survey responses were then complemented by focus groups with YNPN members from five different nonprofit communities: Washington DC, Cincinnati, Houston, Twin Cities (MN) and Denver. These conversations were facilitated by local YNPN leadership, who gathered perspectives from participating young professionals on some of our survey’s most interesting findings.

OUR SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Geographic location</th>
<th>Racial/ethnic background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No experience</td>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>Washington DC = 34%</td>
<td>White/Anglo = 76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>Associates degree</td>
<td>Cincinnati = 38%</td>
<td>Multiple races/ethnicites = 1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>Bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>Houston = 15%</td>
<td>Other = 7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Twin Cities (MN) = 5%</td>
<td>African American = 4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Denver = 3%</td>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander = 4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>Latino/a = 5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Eastern = 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced degree</td>
<td></td>
<td>Native American/Alaskan Native = 1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average age of respondent = 31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Salary</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; $25,000</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 - $49,999</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 - $64,999</td>
<td>39.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$65,000 - $79,999</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000+</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender
- Female = 80%
- Male = 20%

OUR FINDINGS
Before looking at success rates for the strategies we investigated, we simply wanted to know if they were indeed the right recommendations to put forth. For young nonprofit professionals, the answer is a resounding, “yes.” For four of the five sector recommendations we tested, at least three-quarters of survey respondents believed that the strategy could have a positive impact on the sector. For two of these strategies—“offering competitive compensation” and “investing in building bench strength”—the results were even more staggering with over 94% of respondents believing these strategies to be high-impact.

This discovery bodes well! For all the talk of differences in how emerging leaders and current nonprofit managers envision a thriving nonprofit sector, there seems to be important consensus on how to tackle some of our key issues regarding workforce leadership. Having these two groups on the same page should make leadership dialogue a valuable, constructive process that helps emerging leaders feel confident in their abilities and current leaders feel confident that their organizations’ futures are in good hands.

But we know we’re not there yet. So the question remains, if there is general agreement on a way forward—what continues to keep us from experiencing the promised impact of these recommendations? On the following pages, you’ll hear what young professionals had to say.
A solid, relevant and timely strategy can generate excitement, but that excitement will dissipate if the strategy sits on the shelf.

For a number of the professionals we surveyed, the nonprofit organizations they work with may have been aware of the recommended strategies we investigated for developing and retaining talent, but they had not acted on the strategies.

Less than 40% of surveyed nonprofit professionals stated that their organization had undertaken a diversity initiative. Fewer than 20% of respondents stated that their nonprofit had made a change to their organizational structure or chief executive role or conducted some form of succession planning.

We saw another drop-off from the number of organizations implementing these recommendations at all, to the number of organizations implementing them effectively. Only half of the professionals whose organizations had implemented one of these strategies believed the strategy was effectively addressing their nonprofits’ leadership challenges.

When looking more closely at the data and spending more time with YNPN members, we learned that small nonprofits seem to experience these drop-offs differently. Size had a mixed impact on organizations’ tendency to implement, depending on whether the strategy freed up or absorbed capacity. Survey data revealed that smaller organizations were more likely to make structural changes (which open up capacity) than larger nonprofits, but less likely to implement diversity initiatives (which are often perceived as requiring time and resources). YNPN focus groups further explored the impact of organization size on implementation.

“There is not any succession planning happening at my current organization because it is very small and does not have the capacity to think that long-term.”
Finding 2:
Structural change is underrated

The one strategy that steers clear of the above trend was “Moving away from traditional organizational structures and chief executive roles” (“structural change” as shorthand). Young professionals underestimate the impact of this approach. Only half of survey respondents rated structural change as potentially high-impact, a stark contrast to the rave reviews the other four strategies received.

Yet when this strategy was implemented, structural change was the most effective strategy we investigated.

Three of five survey respondents who stated their organization had made a structural change reported that the strategy had strengthened their organizations’ performance and morale.

YNPN focus groups helped to shed light on reasons that make “structural change” a tough recommendation to embrace. A clear chain of command helps ensure accountability and puts nonprofits’ most experienced professionals in a position to lead. YNPN members in Denver also touched on a perception issue, where moving away from hierarchical structure does not always resonate with stakeholders (e.g., funders) who are comfortable interacting with a strong leader.

Yet YNPN members who experienced structural changes at their organizations were strong advocates for the strategy. Nonprofit professionals in DC, Cincinnati and the Twin Cities believe flatter organizations incentivize collaboration, help leaders push each other to improve and give new leaders a better chance to succeed in their new roles. As emerging leaders remove the “emerging” tag from their label, innovative organizational structures may help their transition into the new world of the nonprofit executive.

“I served as a co-director in a nonprofit that traditionally had an executive director. I found the experience to be very positive. The co-director model made the ED job far more realistic and having a partner in advancing the organization’s mission was a very positive experience.”
FINDING 3:
Competitive compensation is key…but a good manager can help

No nonprofit is able to take on every new initiative it believes could yield positive results. In many cases, financial resources are limited, staff is busy, and leadership needs to make tough decisions on where to focus these resources. We asked participants to play the role of a nonprofit leader—and make resource allocation decisions across the five strategies we explored.

When given the kind of constraints nonprofits experience every day, “offering competitive compensation” was the strategy respondents prioritized.

Prioritizing compensation feels like a good place to start if the sector is going to keep talent. Some of the YNPN members in Denver we talked with had completed master’s degrees, believing an advanced degree would help them not only take the next step in their nonprofit careers but also make financial gains. When these professionals returned to the sector and did not receive the kind of salary increases that warranted their investment, frustration quickly set in.

But rather than focusing the conversation on this frustration, YNPN Denver members got creative and thought of other forms of compensation that could ease the dissatisfaction of low pay. In their minds, a good manager was essential. Fortunately, good managers are an asset the nonprofit sector seems to have at its fingertips. Three of four survey respondents described their overall relationship with their manager as good or excellent. When taking a deeper look at survey data and commentary, we learned that nonprofit managers are strong advocates for their staff’s professional development (two-thirds of respondents rated their managers’ interest in their development as good or excellent) and effective internal champions when compensation decisions do arise.

“I’ve been fairly lucky to have supervisors who truly advocated for me within the organization for a raise. Without that, I wouldn’t have received the competitive compensation I did.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAKING TRADE-OFFS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suppose you are a program officer at a national foundation focusing on leadership development in the nonprofit sector. You have a budget of $1 Million to invest towards addressing the following issues facing the sector. How would you allocate your resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppose you are the Executive Director of a nonprofit with $100,000 to spend on addressing your organization’s leadership issues. How would you allocate your resources?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Program Officer</th>
<th>Executive Director</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bench Strength</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession Planning</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Change</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RATINGS YOUR MANAGER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please rate your relationship with your direct supervisor across the following characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her/his active interest in your development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall relationship with your supervisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FINDING 4:
Being left out is not uncommon

YNPN probed into the extent to which organizations were involving young professionals in the planning and implementation of popular leadership development strategies.

It was disconcerting to find that only one of every five survey respondents whose organizations implemented one of the strategies we explored reported that they were not involved in the development or implementation of that strategy.

This finding did not come as much of a surprise to YNPN members during focus groups. In Washington DC, members understood the reasons nonprofit executives took on much of the strategic planning, but felt disconnected from leadership because they were not a part of the conversation that occurred before plans were made. Rather than providing clarity, after-the-fact, top-down communication from leadership just added to young professionals’ frustration. Focus group participants thought that simply implementing an open-door policy would offer staff the opportunity to learn about or even add their two cents on the path their organization is taking.

This finding was even more troubling when considered in light of what survey respondents had to say about diversity within their organizations. The data suggests that there tends to be greater diversity amongst staff than amongst executive leadership, especially when it comes to race and age. So even organizations that are doing a good job of engaging diverse talent (52% of respondents working for organizations implementing diversity initiatives believed these efforts were effective) may still have a long way to go in terms of actual inclusion of diverse voices in decision making. Prioritizing the inclusion of younger leaders in strategy development and decision-making may also have the added effect of bridging the critical and all-too-frequent gap between having diversity and effectively including diverse perspectives.

“Checking boxes around diversity won’t help move us forward, but genuinely seeking diverse perspectives and representation will certainly improve decision making and community impacts.”

DIVERSITY RATINGS
Please rate your current or most recent nonprofit employer’s level of diversity across the following cohorts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial/ethnic background</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Team</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire Organization</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Team</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire Organization</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Very diverse or diverse
- Neutral
- Not diverse
- Unsure
FINDING 5:
Despite systemic challenges, we remain mission-driven

“I don’t see working in a nonprofit as necessary to bringing about social change.”

Young nonprofit professionals are enthusiastic about the strategies we explored in this study, but how long will the enthusiasm last? Many nonprofits are not embracing key leadership strategies—and the organizations that are struggling with implementation and engaging young talent.

Following up on YNPN’s 2007 report, Stepping Up or Stepping Out, we now return to the issue of retention. In 2007, only half of the young professionals we surveyed planned to stay in the nonprofit sector.

This trend continues today as only a third of the professionals we surveyed stated that they are 100% committed to building a nonprofit career.

Stepping Up or Stepping Out revealed that stagnant compensation and a lack of professional development were important reasons why so many YNPN members were considering a sector switch. In 2011, those issues came through loud and clear once more. There are bound to be a multitude of reasons why young nonprofit professionals envision a career outside the sector, but the issues that continue to surface in our research are likely contributors.

Although many young nonprofit professionals seem sector agnostic, they are just as mission focused as ever. Of the professionals that were hesitant to commit to a nonprofit career, 57% stated that they required their job to have an explicit social mission. This means over 70% of our full sample remains committed to building a mission-driven career.

These young, talented professionals want to work for organizations that effectively address leadership issues and involve young talent in key initiatives. If many of our sector’s emerging leaders leave, it will most likely not be due to changes in what motivates their careers. Instead, it will be due to our sector’s inability to effectively employ practical, widely-accepted strategies that position emerging leaders for success.

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**COMMITMENT TO NONPROFIT SECTOR CAREER**
- 34% 100% committed to working in the nonprofit sector
- 66% Willing to work outside the nonprofit sector

**COMMITMENT TO MISSION-DRIVEN WORK**
- 56% Yes
- 29% No
- 15% Unsure
MOVING BEYOND THE CUSP

The good news is that our findings reveal a sector sitting on the exciting cusp of being able to address our most significant leadership challenges. However, our findings also caution that we have the potential to remain on that cusp if we don’t take significant steps towards effectively employing these practical, widely-accepted strategies.

What are the next steps? We offer the following guidance based on feedback from YNPN members:

**NONPROFIT EXECUTIVES:**
Consistently and appropriately involve young professionals

YNPN members understand that most nonprofit leaders are well equipped to make their organizations’ most important decisions. That said, involving young professionals in planning processes will help ensure that good strategies have their intended impact and that young talent sticks around.

- **Treat staff as a key stakeholder.** Design a decision-making process that asks you and your leadership team to think about when and how it involves the rest of the organization at each key step in the strategic planning process.
- **Provide informal, easy-to-implement opportunities for two-way communication.** Open-door policies or office hours can go a long way in helping your leadership team build trust.
- **Share insight into decision-making.** Young professionals understand why you are leading the charge and that some decisions will be made without their input. However clearly articulating the process and sharing your insight will help them feel their perspectives were taken into account.

“Nonprofits have an obligation to groom employees for leadership no matter if they stay or leave. It strengthens the profession overall and benefits the community.”

**EMERGING LEADERS:**
Bring high-impact ideas to your organizations.

Finding good ideas should not fall solely on an organization’s leadership team. Do not assume the strategies we explored in this study are circulating throughout your organization. If you have an idea that you believe will improve your organization, do not sit on it. But before you act, prepare accordingly.

- **Understand context before suggesting a solution.** Make sure you thoroughly understand the problem your organization is facing. Talk with those who may deeply understand the problem so you get the evidence needed to make your case.
- **Leverage relationships.** Colleagues, supervisors and mentors can help you think through ways to get the ball rolling or provide honest feedback on where the idea may land on your organization’s priority list.
- **Be a partner.** Respect the process it will take to get your organization’s full attention, but also find smart and creative ways to keep it on the radar of the right people. Reach out from the position of a partner who has new ideas on ways to make positive change.

WHAT WE ARE DOING:
**YNPN Cleveland**
To ensure young professionals are building strong relationships with local nonprofit leaders, YNPN Cleveland recently launched its Fall Mentor Program. Mentees meet with their mentors every month to discuss career goals and develop new skill sets. The program culminates in January with a networking mixer for all participants.

WHAT WE ARE DOING:
**YNPN Denver**
YNPN Denver’s “Learning Circles” give members the opportunity to discuss their perspectives on key nonprofit issues. Participants engage in facilitated discussions about sector trends and seek ways to make their career more sustainable.
The nonprofit sector has done an impressive job of thinking and strategizing around leadership and change over the past decade. Our hope is that the findings presented here—drawn from the perspectives of those that the strategies frequently target—will serve to deepen the sector’s understanding of how to most effectively implement these ideas.

Though presented separately, our guiding thoughts grow stronger when embraced together as a holistic shift in approach to leadership development and talent retention. If each of us in our various roles pushes at the same time, we can make significant strides towards addressing the nonprofit sector’s most pressing leadership challenges. Stronger leadership will yield stronger organizations that are better positioned to have an impact on our society. And when it comes down to it, having impact is why so many of us are drawn to the sector in the first place.
RESOURCES

Below are the reports, studies and publications that YNPN reviewed throughout this initiative and that we recommend to our members and readers.

Lester M. Salamon and Stephanie Lessans Geller, The Nonprofit Workforce Crisis: Real or Imagined? (John Hopkins University, 2007)


Stan Hinden, Transition at the Top (Washington Post, February 23, 2003)

2009 Nonprofit Employment Trends Survey (Nonprofit HR Solutions, 2009)

Alexander Cortez, William Foster, Katie Smith Milway, Nonprofit M&A: More Than a Tool for Tough Times, (Bridgespan Group, February 2009)

Kathy Hedge, Eva Nico, Lindsay Fox, Advancing Good Governance: How Grantmakers Invest in the Governance of Nonprofit Organizations (BoardSource and FSG, March 2009)

Jeanne Bell et al., Daring to Lead—A National Study of Nonprofit Executive Leadership, (CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, 2006)

Marla Cornelius et al., Ready to Lead? Next Generation Leaders Speak Out, (Compass Point Nonprofit Services, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation, and Idealist.org, 2008)

Finding Leaders for America’s Nonprofits, (The Bridgespan Group, 2009)

Heather Gowdy et al., Convergence — How five trends will reshape the social sector, (LaPiana Consulting, 2009)


Frances Kunreuther and Patrick A. Corvington, Next Shift: Beyond the Nonprofit Leadership Crisis (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007)

Leadership Development and Leadership Change, (Building Movement Project, 2009)

Josh Solomon and Yarrow Sandahl, Stepping Up or Stepping Out, A Report on the Readiness of Next Generation Nonprofit Leaders (Young Nonprofit Professionals Network, 2007)

Thomas J. Tierney, The Nonprofit Sector’s Leadership Deficit (The Bridgespan Group, 2006)

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