



2023-24 Pro Bono Consulting Project Topics Chicago/Twin Cities

These services may include stakeholder interviews, focus groups, organization or other stakeholder surveys, landscape/competitor analysis, literature searches, interviews with subject matter experts or “leaders in the field,” best practice research, and analysis of specific data either collected or already in house. The deliverable typically will be the results of analysis of this information and recommendations for next steps.

We will offer projects in: **Board Development, Funding Strategy, New Ventures, Strategic Alignment, Strategic Marketing, Technology & Data Strategy, Organizational Performance and Decision Support.** Compass welcomes the opportunity to discuss your priorities and help identify the most appropriate project for your current needs.

Please see descriptions for all project options here:

I. BOARD DEVELOPMENT

A. Board Gap and Performance Assessment

Survey and interview the board of directors to identify gaps in skills, industry expertise, board expertise, satisfaction with board performance, and opportunities for improvement.

B. Board Structure and Organization

Review the board’s organization, structure, roles and responsibilities, accountabilities, processes, and goal setting. Review by-laws and board’s policies and procedures. Make recommendations for further development.

C. Board Role: Fundraising Best Practices

Define the roles and responsibilities of the Board’s Development Committee and its relationship with the Director of Development and fundraising staff. Shared goal setting. Give or Get concept, and training board members to be spokespeople for your organization.

II. DECISION SUPPORT

Decision Support projects are designed to provide flexible consulting and data-driven support. A nonprofit leader may be faced with an opportunity/challenge that demands resolution or may be seeking to inject greater analytical rigor in an area of the nonprofit’s operations. A Compass team can 1) generate data, analyze information, and create frameworks to support current and future decision-making, 2) evaluate the consequences of course adjustments or opportunities, 3) provide decision making support to nonprofits as they plan next steps. If the key decision at hand involves an idea for a new product or service, please see *New Ventures* below.

III. FUNDING STRATEGY

A. Funding Sources and Uses Analysis

Is your organization overly dependent on any particular source of funds? What opportunities exist for diversification, if any? Review how comparable organizations are raising funds. Analyze how competitors are raising funds. What investment is required to generate a specific new funding source?

B. Assess Return on Investment (ROI) of Key Activities

Review sources and uses of revenues for specific activities (programming, events) and identify which programs are net sources of revenue and which are net users, or when a specific investment will break even (does the activity produce a positive return on investment (ROI)?). Identify analyses your organization should be performing regularly to ensure that dollars are getting the best possible use.

C. Cultivation Strategies to Increase Donor Contributions

Analyze the donor population. Focus groups with donors. What benefits are most attractive to a specific donor population to ensure renewed subscriptions and/or increased support. Best practices in comparable organizations. Identify which benefits are most attractive to specific donor demographics.

D. Best Practices in Funding Strategies for Industry Segment

Literature and Internet search for best practices, innovative approaches. Interview subject matter experts and 'best in class' organizations for new opportunities.

IV. NEW VENTURES

Nonprofit leaders often have great ideas for new programs or earned income ventures but lack the organizational bandwidth to evaluate them. A Compass team will gather the data and conduct the analysis to assess the feasibility of a new initiative. A project would include market and competitive research, financial modeling, and an examination of strategic, organizational, and operational considerations that leadership would need to make a more informed decision about moving forward.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

A. Performance Evaluation, Feedback and Development for Staff

Review processes for employee position posting, hiring, and orientation, setting expectations, training, providing feedback, and getting employee input. Ensure that your organization is taking steps appropriate to get the right person in the right job, ensure that they are trained and acculturated properly, and avoid non-performance issues.

B. Job Descriptions and Goal Setting/ Evaluation for Senior Staff

Review position descriptions, organization structure, scope of responsibility, and goal setting for senior staff positions.

C. Organizational Performance Evaluation and Goal Setting

Help the board with annual goal setting for your organization, for programs and processes, and for key staff, including performance evaluation processes. Review/ update the position descriptions of the ED and senior staff as needed.

D. Dashboards/Performance Metrics/Best Practices for Industry Segment

Survey comparable organizations and available literature to identify the best practices in performance evaluation and measurement for that industry. Help the nonprofit develop performance metrics, at a high level, that are appropriate to its needs and consistent with the best practices in the industry.

VI. STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

A. Stakeholder Interviews: Mission and Vision Development

Interview organizational stakeholders regarding your organization's mission, values, and do a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis as a key input into a strategic planning process.

B. Client Satisfaction Survey/ Focus Groups

Survey the nonprofit's client population regarding satisfaction with services received and/or conduct focus groups to identify areas for program improvement or opportunities to provide additional or modified services.

C. Best Practices in Specific Area of Program Management

Review some aspects of a program with strategic implications and examine how competitors or other comparable nonprofits engage in this aspect of program management.

D. Program Impact

Review existing program metrics. Identify new or enhanced metrics that are most consistent with your organization's stated strategic objectives, potentially including a review of the information systems currently in use.

E. Partnership Analysis

Develop a SWOT analysis of your organization and the current/prospective partner(s). Look at risks and opportunities associated with the partnership(s). Assess potential costs and make a recommendation on whether to maintain/pursue a relationship or not.

F. Partnership Opportunities

Identification and initial screening of potential partnership opportunities.

VII. STRATEGIC MARKETING

A. Branding and Positioning

Evaluate and enhance brand definition and messaging. Recommend ways to increase awareness among target populations. Review communications, public relations, and marketing content to ensure all are aligned with the new brand and reinforce the mission.

B. Marketing Roadmap

Develop a strategic marketing roadmap for a specific program or organizational priority. Provide recommended tactics to achieve identified goals (e.g., educating clients regarding program services, reaching new audiences, increasing participants).

C. Marketing Budget Assessment

Establish measures that assess the return on investment (ROI) of current marketing activities and provide insight to inform the best way to utilize marketing budget.

D. Digital and Social Media Strategy

Increase or strengthen digital and social media marketing. Recommend digital strategies to build awareness and maximize engagement.

VIII. TECHNOLOGY & DATA STRATEGY

A. Using Data for Decision-Making

Assess how data collection processes, tools, and analysis can better support decision-making in areas such as financial management and reporting, managing volunteers, clients, or donors, or other internal areas. Research tools that visually show results of data collected.

B. Making the Most of Existing Technology

Assess existing technology capabilities and recommend a strategy for more effectively using existing technology to support your organization's strategic goals or to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Evaluate technology's impact on people and processes.

C. Assessing New Technology Opportunities

Determine opportunities to use new or different technology to improve organizational efficiency, effectiveness, and security. Can be focused on a program area or key function. Prioritize technology options. Create a timeline for implementing new technology while taking into account your organization's goals and resources.