

Nonprofit Community's Willingness to Collaborate

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The Need to Collaborate

While nonprofit management scholars and practitioners have theorized different key features of collaboration, few have empirically tested the nonprofit community's perception of collaboration and what drives the decision to collaborate.



For charitable foundations like the Community Foundation for Southern Arizona (CFSA), collaboration is highly valued. (CF Campus – Tucson, AZ)

“We value the transformative power of partnerships based on mutual interests, trust and respect. We believe that by working together we can create a more positive and lasting impact on the community.” - CFSA

Jake has developed a complex survey tool that can measure the nonprofit community's perception towards collaboration, diagnose the preconditions to collaborate, and understand what the key features of collaboration are using econometric tools adapted from the field of ecosystem service valuation.

Measuring Collaboration

-  E-mailed Qualtrics survey to all members of Community Foundation Campus (2 large charitable foundations and 12 nonprofit organizations)
-  Willingness to Collaborate Tool presents 8 hypothetical scenarios
-  Asks respondent to imagine themselves as the Executive Director of their nonprofit organization
-  They vote on whether they would collaborate or not
-  Choices include different scenarios of **finances, leadership, motivation, compatibility, and established track record**

Results

WILLINGNESS TO COLLABORATE = Financial Resources + Leadership + Motivation + Mission Statement Compatibility + Track Record + Respondent Years of Experience + Respondent Ethnicity + Nonprofit Size + Nonprofit Age

Empirical model used to quantify a nonprofit's willingness to collaborate using a logistic regression equation.



Mission statement (*)**, **Years of Experience (**)**, **Leadership (*)**, **Track Record (*)**, and **Ethnicity (*)** are all statistically significant predictors of a respondent's willingness to collaborate.

Top 3 conditions that respondents believe their organizations are doing well in

- Our leadership is personally credible
- Our nonprofit values a culture of learning
- Our nonprofit organization trusts other nonprofits with similar goals

Top 3 conditions in need of improvement for collaboration

- External evaluation to assess mission effectiveness
- Data-driven leadership
- Internal monitoring for continuous improvement



Respondents were mixed about collaboration being risky and didn't believe data was very important for collaboration

Discussion

This study examined which socio-economic factors influence a nonprofit's willingness to collaborate in a hypothetical scenario and preference for different collaborative situations. Overall, statistically significant results indicate that:

- nonprofits value whether the proposed partner organization shares a similar mission statement when engaging in the decision to collaborate
- sharing a very similar mission statement increases the likelihood of collaboration
- more experienced respondents are more hesitant to collaborate, suggesting that experience might demonstrate that acts of collaboration aren't always the most beneficial use of resources in time from a management perspective.



- It would be extremely beneficial for funders and foundations to promote collaboration by assessing mission statement compatibility.
- If funders encourage two nonprofits with different mission statements to collaborate, those nonprofits may be less likely to do so compared to nonprofits with similar mission statements.
- More resources should be directed towards nonprofits to ensure they have the capacity to properly monitor and evaluate their effectiveness at delivering services and programs using data.

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