

Demand Intensifies From Non-Profits Seeking Senior Talent



Non-profit organizations in 2023 are facing inflation, declining donations, increased demand for services, workforce shortages, and more. A recent non-profit trends report by Forbes says that the changing workforce is presenting challenges for both for-profit and non-profit leaders. Being ready to consider alternative staffing options would put many of them ahead of the shifting landscape, says Forbes. Fractional staffing possibilities exist from the administrative level through the executive director level, says the report, and may be worthy of consideration for both short-term vacancies and long-term solutions. For senior-level positions, many leading non-profits are turning to executive search firms.

A search for a non-profit executive has much in common with any personnel search, and most boards have members who have hired many people in their careers. The distinctions in the hiring of an executive by a volunteer board, however, create special process issues, and a specialized search firm is best suited to address these, says a report from **The Moran Company**.

"Poorly executed searches may result in hiring delays, poor selection, loss of good candidates, or a difficult start for the new executive," the firm said. "A strong search process that is well articulated, adopted by the board, and enforced by leadership of the board prevents these problems. Since by design, a volunteer board relies on management and leadership from paid staff, there's a natural gap when a board begins its search and the selected firm steps into that gap."

Search consultants are a valuable resource who have seen it all (almost) and are ready to help navigate troubled waters. "But all boards and searches benefit from a clear process that anticipates every step – and just as important, a search chair with the authority and assertiveness to enforce the process," The Moran Company said.

Continued Demand

"Demand for executive search among our non-profit leaders continues to be very strong," said Sara Lundberg as managing partner, North America non-profit practice at **DHR Global**. "Some experienced a modest slowdown in Q1, but have seen continued and strong demand across the sector. We see some clients experiencing dramatic growth, and with those groups, we are being brought on to fill ever-expanding needs, recruiting for multiple roles, particularly to increase expertise at the senior level as organizations – and their needs – become more complex."

"We are seeing an increased demand for skilled CHROs," Ms. Lundberg said. "As organizations settle into new ways of doing things, and as continued hybrid work and remote structures pressure leadership to adapt, non-profits are turning to us to help them find more skilled HR leaders who can help them to manage people in new ways, as well as build and grow teams, and the culture that binds them."

BY THE NUMBERS

Are Non-Profits Underpaying Employees?

45% of non-profit employees are expected to seek new jobs by 2025...

....**49%** percent said that non-profit organizations do not pay enough.

Source: Nonprofit HR

"In general, non-profit employees are liberal in politics and nature, and there are now certain states in the country – Florida, Texas, Tennessee among them – where candidates are reluctant to work," said James Abruzzo, managing partner, global non-profit practice at DHR. "These are direct responses to the changing political environments and it's having a serious impact on non-profits, even those in cities with more liberal bents."

"We are seeing much more transparency in search processes," said Ms. Lundberg. "Non-profits are increasingly using staff hiring panels to build buy-in for hires. While this addition slows a search process, we are finding that non-profits – and their new hires – benefit from the increased inclusivity and the diversity of views. Candidates are leading with questions about work location and arrangement. Non-profits who have not adopted hybrid or flexible work arrangements are losing out on candidates who grew accustomed to flexibility."

(cont'd. to page 2)

Latest Findings

5 Things to Look for in a Not-for-Profit Leader

A recent report from **Battalia Winston** outlines five factors that not-for-profit boards should consider when hiring a new leader:

- 1. Passion for the mission:** A not-for-profit board should look for a leader who is passionate about the organization's mission and is committed to making a difference in the community. The leader should be able to articulate their passion for the cause and demonstrate their commitment to achieving the organization's goals.
- 2. Strategic thinking:** The leader should be a strategic thinker who can develop and execute plans that align with the organization's mission and goals. They should be able to anticipate future trends and challenges and develop strategies that enable the organization to respond effectively
- 3. Fundraising and financial management skills:** A not-for-profit board should look for a leader who has experience in fundraising and financial management. The leader should be able to develop and implement fundraising strategies that generate revenue and ensure the organization's financial sustainability.
- 4. Strong communication and interpersonal skills:** The leader should have excellent communication and interpersonal skills to build relationships with stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners. They should be able to communicate the organization's mission and goals effectively and inspire others to support the organization's work.
- 5. Leadership and management experience:** The leader should have experience in leading and managing teams and be able to motivate and inspire staff and volunteers to achieve the organization's goals. They should have a track record of successful leadership and be able to manage the organization's operations effectively.

Because there are fewer non-profit jobs than corporate jobs, and lower compensation in our sector, the current economic environment is having even more of an impact on non-profits, according to Mr. Abruzzo. "Human service jobs in states challenged by soaring homelessness, like New York and California, are becoming harder to fill as the challenges those organizations face feel increasingly insurmountable. During the pandemic, many non-profit executives postponed their retirement and we are now seeing many leaders transition. The sector hasn't invested in enough in building successors and is suffering as a result."

Non-profit executive searches are incredibly active right now, according to Deb Taft, CEO of **Lindauer**. "Talent shortages preceded the pandemic, and competition for leadership talent has only grown more fierce as organizations adjust to the social, cultural, and economic transformations galvanized by the Great Resignation and Great Recalibration," she said. "The pandemic prompted people to reflect deeply on what they value most and how they might reconfigure their lives to craft an improved work-life approach. Global protests inspired professionals to think expansively about the role institutions play in creating, reinforcing, and perpetuating systemic racism."

Switching Career Paths

"As a result, fundraisers and C-suite non-profit leaders have been leaving jobs and, in some cases, switching career paths in search of

positions or sectors with which they feel more value alignment," Ms. Taft said. "At the same time, non-profits spent the past few years planning and preparing for ambitious fundraising campaigns and are now moving ahead with initiatives. There is voracious demand to hire and develop advancement staff who will engage donors, raise historic sums, and fuel these aspirations."

Ms. Taft also notes that non-profits now have critical positions to fill in a very competitive job market. "It is a challenging time, but one that presents organizations with opportunities to evaluate what can be done to engage, retain, and attract top talent," she said. "Some leaders are taking measures to respond to shifting workforce expectations, creating more flexible hybrid work arrangements. Embracing these policies and practices is a bare minimum, however. On a deeper, systemic level, organizations are finding they must be open to reshaping their cultures to ensure staff have the support they need, feel connected to community and mission purpose, and see pathways to grow as people and professionals."

Economic uncertainty is very much in the minds of institutional leaders and boards. The *2023 Giving USA Report* from The Giving Institute, Ms. Taft says, also highlights some challenging trends in philanthropy. While the non-profit sector expected some giving correction in 2023 from the prior few years, the 13.4 percent drop in giving by individuals and 10.5 percent decrease in overall giving from all sources raised questions about economic trends influencing individuals' capacity and inclination to support causes they care about. "Longitudinal charitable giving data reveals that non-profits will call upon their creativity, ingenuity, and resilience to move beyond this recent down-cycle," Ms. Taft said.

"Non-profit environments are not immune to many other global workplace trends," said Ms. Taft. "Turnover in top leadership remains high, and staff turnover tends to follow suit within one to three years. Enormous resources are going to hiring, onboarding, and organizational realignment and stabilization work. Employees who stay are expressing frustration or quiet quitting in the face of carrying extra burden amidst the churn and staffing deficits, resulting in high burnout and decreases in employee satisfaction."

In recent Washburn and McGoldrick data on non-profit advancement, 52 percent of respondents cited staff shortages and resignations as major challenges going forward, with burnout/uncertainty and staff morale ranking immediately behind. "And while the pressure to return to the office remains high in the non-profit sector, employees are resisting the return, with the majority seeking flexible hybrid arrangements," Ms. Taft said. "And it's important to note that most organizations that instituted aggressive return-to-office policies are not seeing higher productivity results; productivity is proving higher in hybrid work modes."

"The non-profit sector is highly active right now," said Sally Stetson, co-founder and managing partner at **Salveson Stetson Group**. "Much of this is due to the number of CEOs and executive directors preparing to retire. This is a particular challenge for non-profit organizations as they typically do not have a deep bench of talent to access for internal succession candidates. We have also noticed a trend in the non-profit sector around

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organizations elevating their talent to meet the changing needs of their mission and focus.”

Ms. Stetson also notes that the non-profit sector tends to be attractive to senior executives from the for-profit sector because there is a perception that the work will be more meaningful. “They are seeking that focus in the latter part of their career,” she said. “Many executives believe it will be less demanding, but they are often surprised by the added financial pressures and extended responsibilities of attending and supporting fundraising and other community events.”

Struggling to Identify Talent

The current challenges non-profits are facing aren’t all that different from the past, according to Ms. Stetson. “Financial challenges tend to top the list,” she said. “Non-profits constantly strive to diversify their funding sources and increase their fundraising capabilities. Non-profits also struggle to identify and retain talent while faced with an aging workforce and a limited ability to build a bench of talent. This makes it very tough for non-profits to develop talent strategies and succession plans to support their organizational objectives. Additionally, attracting committed board members who can offer dedicated support and fundraising continues to challenge non-profits.”

Ms. Stetson says that Salveson Stetson Group aims to have multiple diverse candidates on every slate, which is true for all executive searches they conduct in the non-profit sector. “Non-profits tend to have a more diverse workforce in general, which is attractive to candidates,” she said. “I wouldn’t say it’s easier or harder to attract candidates for non-profits, but when an organization can provide clarity on its culture, vision, and mission, it’s much easier to match that with a candidate’s passion and purpose. So, finding executive talent to enhance and build on the culture, vision, and mission becomes much easier.”

Executive search for non-profits is currently driven by several key factors that reflect the changing landscape and evolving needs of the sector, according to Nat Schiffer, managing partner at **The Christopher Group**. “Firstly, there is a significant focus on leadership succession planning as long-serving executives retire or transition to new roles,” he said. “Non-profit organizations are recognizing the importance of effective succession planning to ensure a smooth transition and maintain organizational stability. Secondly, there is a growing demand for leaders with diverse skills and expertise. As the non-profit sector becomes more professionalized, organizations require executives with business acumen, strategic thinking, financial management, and innovation skills, alongside a deep understanding of the non-profit landscape. Moreover, there is an increased emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion within non-profit leadership teams. Recognizing the value of diverse perspectives and experiences, organizations are actively seeking executives from underrepresented backgrounds to enrich decision-making and align with sector values.”

“Additionally, the adoption of technology within the non-profit sector has driven the need for executives with strong digital strategies, data analytics, and technology implementation (cont’d. to page 4)

skills,” he said. “Non-profits are leveraging technology to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and enhance their impact. Another driving force in executive search is the growing focus on impact measurement and outcomes. Donors, funders, and stakeholders are placing greater importance on quantifiable results, prompting non-profit organizations to seek executives with a track record of driving measurable outcomes and implementing robust evaluation frameworks.”

Mr. Schiffer says that non-profit organizations face a range of challenges that impact their operations, sustainability, and mission fulfillment. He points to key challenges including funding and financial sustainability, as securing consistent resources is often difficult. “The competitive landscape for resources and donor support poses an ongoing challenge, requiring non-profits to differentiate themselves effectively,” Mr. Schiffer said. “Adapting to changing regulations and policies can be demanding, requiring compliance with legal frameworks and reporting requirements. Volunteer recruitment and retention can also be challenging, given evolving societal dynamics and increasing demands on individuals’ time. Furthermore, non-profits often compete with other sectors for talent, making recruitment and retention difficult. Demonstrating impact and measuring outcomes requires robust monitoring and evaluation systems, which can be resource-intensive. Board governance and leadership are crucial, but recruiting qualified board members and fostering effective governance practices can be challenging. Adapting to technological advancements is vital, yet limited resources and digital literacy can hinder progress. External factors such as economic downturns, natural disasters, and public health emergencies can disrupt operations and strain resources.”

“We have seen an increase in the use of executive search for a whole range of roles in the non-profit sector, from program officer positions, through to C-suite, and board member appointments,” said Siobhan Doherty, partner, regional practice head, social impact and environment, Americas at **Perrett Laver**. “This trend really accelerated during the pandemic, when organizations began experiencing what was widely labelled, the great resignation.”

Non-profit HR’s 2021 Non-profit Talent Retention Practices Survey found that 42 percent of responding non-profit leaders expected their employee turnover rates to increase in the following year, and 80 percent of respondents said that their organizations did not have a talent retention strategy in place. “The rate of turnover, at all levels within organizations, certainly seemed to come as a shock to the sector, particularly after a number of senior leaders had made the decision to stay in place in 2020 and see their organizations through the initial phases of the pandemic,” Ms. Doherty said. “A range of factors, from burnout to a shift in donor behavior, to the impact of George Floyd’s murder, all served at the macro level to creating more role vacancies. However, these trends are not only having a negative impact on the sector. We have seen an increase in the use of executive search for non-profits as these organizations address the critical need for successful DEI and sustainability practices, which must be driven in part by representative leaders. We partner closely with our non-profit clients and the candidates we are supporting in our searches,

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to address these challenges, including the glass cliff phenomenon impact leaders of color, in particular.”

Non-profits face myriad challenges at both macro and micro levels today, according to Erik Jackson, partner at Perrett Laver. “Many non-profits are still working to recover from the pandemic, which affected parts of the sector in very different ways, from entire shifts in strategy, to the challenge of getting staff to return to the office or embrace new ways of working,” he said. “The trend of populism in many parts of the world has not abated, and there are countries where legal frameworks make it almost impossible to fundraise from abroad, or even register as a non-profit. Fundraising remains a clear challenge for many non-profits, exacerbated by turnover of fundraising staff and donor generosity remains tied to the health of wider economy despite innovations in fundraising.”

“In the U.K., the merger of DFID with the FCO, to create the FCDO in 2020, has left a gap in international funding, and in support of the aid sector as a whole,” Mr. Jackson said. “USAID localization processes and actions seek to put local actors in the lead, strengthen local systems, and be responsive to local communities; however, this is posing new challenges to non-profits who must develop new ways of working with, and through, local partners, handing over power without leaving a power and resource vacuum. Non-profits are increasingly having to wrestle with the need to demonstrate results, while empowering others and giving trust to both internal and external stakeholders. Finally, non-profits have a significant role to play in advocating for their partners and the communities they represent. Again, representative, inclusive and compassionate leadership is vital to success but institutionalized discrimination will take time to address and overcome. We seek to support our clients in taking on these challenges, and finding leaders who will identify the opportunities and solutions to help their organization and the sector thrive in the future.”

“We have seen a slight decrease in demand for search compared to last year, which was an unusual year with unprecedented demand,” said Molly Brennan, global managing partner, non-profit and social impact practice at **Diversified Search Group**. “I think we are returning to a baseline, healthy level. A significant factor driving demand now is a generational shift in leadership. We are seeing very high numbers of founders and long-time leaders retiring, opening the door for new leaders to step in.”

Ms. Brennan also says that the motivation to align careers with personal values that spiked during COVID is still very strong. “We are seeing a number of leaders for the private sector who are interested in a second career that is more explicitly focused on mission-driven social impact work,” she said.

“One of the most significant and oft-mentioned challenges that non-profit leaders are grappling with right is managing a diverse, multi-generational workforce that continues to expect more from its employers than previous generations - especially around social impact, career development, organizational culture, and work-life balance,” said Ms. Brennan. “We also have noted that leaders are focused on strategically and proactively developing internal talent and planning for successions.”

IN THE NEWS

Lindauer Places Chief Development Officer for Children's Hospital of Orange County



Lindauer has helped to place Jessica L. Miley as chief development officer for Children's Hospital of Orange County (CHOC) in California. Ms. Miley, a proven fundraiser in healthcare who has dedicated her career to serving children and families in need, will direct all fundraising and development programs for Orange County's only pediatric healthcare system. The assignment was led by Libby Roberts, executive vice president and managing director, and Tensie J. Taylor, search consultant.

“Lindauer was an exceptional partner in the search process,” said Tom Capizzi, vice president, chief people officer at CHOC. “They truly took the time to get to know our mission, vision, and values. Through their stakeholder interview process, they were able to embrace our organizational culture here at CHOC as well as the unique Southern California philanthropic environment. They provided excellent counsel and support to our search committee, which led to us successfully finding our new leader for the CHOC Foundation.” Lindauer serves higher and secondary education, hospitals, academic research centers, think tanks, research facilities, and foundations, as well as advocacy, public service, social justice and other mission-driven non-profits.

Diverse Placements

More than half of Diversified's placements in the non-profit and social impact sector identify as people of color. “We have a strong track record in this area as a result of years of strategic focus on development diverse networks and internal training and learning around diversity, equity, and inclusion in the executive search process,” Ms. Brennan said. “I don't think there is a single reason why a diverse pool of candidates are attracted to one sector over another. Our population is diverse, and therefore candidate pools are diverse regardless of what sector you are looking at. What's different is the level of diversity as you move up the ladder in terms of seniority, and there are a wide range of factors that play into that, from systemic racism that has limited opportunities for advancement for certain people to economic realities that make a lower paying job in the non-profit sector less feasible for some.”

“Over the past two years, demand for executive searches across the non-profit sector has increased in volume,” said Ericka Miller, president and CEO of **Isaacson, Miller**. “While we're not seeing the intensity of unexpected leadership change that we experienced in 2021 and 2022, 2023 continues to be a strong year for executive search activity across the mission-driven sector. Primary growth drivers include increased demand for leaders who can scale organizations and institutions, a rising call for equitable, diverse, and inclusive leadership that effectively engages internal and external communities, a heightened focus on leadership in healthcare and academic medicine to address our most pressing public health challenges, and an increase in demand for inaugural leaders at STEM organizations focused on innovation.”

Senior leaders who successfully steered organizations through the depths of the pandemic experienced

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stress and burnout, according to Ms. Miller. "This yielded earlier than planned retirements and departures mid- and post pandemic," she said. "New leaders are now taking the helm and reimagining what a post-pandemic workplace needs in order to thrive. The racial reckoning across the nation inspired many organizations to focus intently on equity, diversity, and inclusion resulting in the creation of roles to lead these initiatives. With technological innovation advancing at a rapid pace, non-profit organizations at the intersection of science, technology, and society, are calling on executive search firms to fill newly created roles. STEM- focused legacy institutions, higher education institutions, and startups alike must ensure that program offerings and operational procedures align with contemporary needs, while pushing into new frontiers of research and development. Inaugural leaders are in high demand to pioneer these cutting-edge endeavors. Organizations across the non-profit sector are calling on innovative leaders to solve complex problems in our current climate."

Ms. Miller notes that during and post pandemic, non-profit organizations, especially those across the health and human services sector, saw a greater demand for services. "Alongside an increased need for aid, the current economic climate, thick with rate hikes and inflation, is yielding a decline in donations," she said. "Many organizations are struggling to absorb increased costs driven by demand while facing declining resources. Higher education institutions are also facing heightened attention to issues of cost and access, and some are confronting declining enrollment. Leadership across the board is facing a greater need to think strategically about potential opportunities for increased revenue from new and expanded programs."

Keeping Up With Technology

Non-profit organizations across all sectors also continue to race to keep up with advances in technology, Ms. Miller notes. "Higher education institutions are incorporating digital and online tools to drive educational and administrative activities," she said. "These advances are challenging non-profit leaders across all sectors to adapt and innovate new processes and delivery methods."

Some non-profit sectors attract and cultivate strong and diverse pipelines of up-and-coming leadership, while others have historically faced challenges with respect to diversity, according to Ms. Miller. "For sectors in which there are a lower number of leaders from underrepresented backgrounds, intentional professional development of managers and C-suite leaders is key," she said. "With regard to successful executive searches in fields that have historically lacked leaders from underrepresented backgrounds, there must be a strong partnership among the search consultants, the organization's search committee members, and the decision-maker. A commitment to investing time in substantive conversations with potential candidates and sources of candidate names, sincerity in those conversations, and openness to different professional backgrounds are critical to recruiting diverse leadership across the civic sector."

"Our executive search non-profit practice has never been more robust," said Shelli Herman, founder and *(cont'd. to page 7)*

president of **Shelli Herman and Associates**. “We are consistently being asked to work with boards to replace C-suite leadership in an ongoing and decisive manner. The pandemic took a lot out of leaders, both those with decades of experience and those new to their positions. Now that organizations are out of the worst parts of the crisis, executives are making the decision to exit either because they are just exhausted or because they want to shift gears in some meaningful way. We are also seeing CEOs decide to retire early or pursue personal passion projects like coaching or volunteer and/or paid board work. Even outside of the strain that global events placed on many non-profit executive teams, boards are asking a lot of leaders! CEOs used to stay 10 or more years in positions; now, five to eight years seems to be the more common tenure in the role. I anticipate the changes will continue to be pretty fluid and many leaders will transition away from their current organizations because of the ever changing and expanding expectations of their boards coming out of COVID.”

“Funders need to step up to assist and donors need to begin seeing human capital funding as a central way in which these organizations get better and have a greater impact.”

“These trends have prompted many organizations to seek outside partnership and to be more intentional when recruiting C-suite talent reporting to the chief executive, as they wisely understand that to be part of succession planning and long-term organizational stability,” Ms. Herman said. “A number of recent searches we have conducted were for repeat clients whose CEOs needed to find candidates who would fill the needs on their teams now, but who the organizations could invest in and cultivate as possible successors. The work has never been more important or more challenging.”

The war for talent at all levels in the sector has never been more pressing and organizations cannot find good people to do even the most basic jobs, according to Ms. Herman. “They cannot keep talent because other organizations lure them away with salary, work from home options, and other perks,” she said.

Ms. Herman recently had a client who had to close one of their most important service delivery sites because they could not find teachers or certified instructors to do the work, it was devastating for this organization, and they are not alone. “Until or unless non-profits start to run as a business or move away from the poverty mindset (meaning, thinking they cannot pay for talent and not seeing that as a necessary investment), this will continue to be a problem,” Ms. Herman said. “Author Dan Pallotta, who wrote *Uncharitable*, really had it right when he pinpointed the financial restraints on non-profits as the biggest way in which they undermine themselves. Specifically, he talked about paying staff at or below minimum wage as a core challenge in the sector. We are seeing this play out fully and it is disappointing. Funders need to step up to assist and donors need to begin seeing human capital funding as a central way in which these organizations get better and have a greater impact.”



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SPOTLIGHT

Veteran Search Consultant Shares Views on Non-Profit Sector



*Sam Pettway, a 30-year search veteran, launched **BoardWalk Consulting** in 2002. Over his career in executive search, he has worked with hundreds of board members and leadership teams with entities ranging from start-ups to mature multinationals in both the corporate and non-profit*

sectors. Mr. Pettway has served clients as varied as international relief agencies, national foundations, regional trade associations and local agencies in dozens of markets.

Throughout his career, Mr. Pettway has been an active trustee of numerous non-profits, associations and foundations, both public and private. He was on the founding board for 12 years each with two particularly impactful start-ups, Atlanta Police Foundation and Atlanta International School, now widely regarded as models for the power of public-private partnerships (APF) and diversity in action (AIS).

BoardWalk Consulting, based in Atlanta, is a national executive search firm that recruits CEOs and senior leadership for mission-driven non-profit organizations. The firm leads executive searches for clients from across the non-profit sector with global, national, regional, and local missions.

*Mr. Pettway recently sat down with **Hunt Scanlon Media** to discuss what is happening today at non-profits and some challenges they are facing when finding senior-level talent.*

Sam, how active is executive search for non-profits right now?

For the most part, the record-setting pace of the past three years continues across the non-profit sector. A number of retirements that had been postponed during the pandemic, whether by the individual or the organization, have now been activated. The number of request for proposals in the market may not be at an all-time high, but there are days it feels that way. At heart of it all is a renewed appreciation for the value of first-rate leadership.

Why is the non-profit sector attractive to senior executives perhaps looking to steer away from the for-profit sector?

A consistent theme throughout BoardWalk Consulting's 20-plus years serving the sector: the move from success to significance. Purpose-driven work has enormous appeal to executives whose lives may have been governed primarily by economic metrics – greater market share, stronger earnings per share reports, higher PE multiples and the like – that feed egos and bank accounts but not the soul. The pandemic has taught all of us new ways to work; for many, it also taught us new *whys* to work.

What are some current challenges facing non-profits today?

Scarcity is always the challenge: Non-profits are accustomed dealing with scarcity – of people, money, bandwidth, time – but the exploding demand for many non-profits' services have been especially taxing in recent years. Other challenges include adapting to the needs and expectations of a younger and more diverse

workforce. The trend itself is not new, but its impact on boardroom discussions is increasingly evident. And while most non-profits know how important diverse funding streams are to long-term financial health, many are challenged in their adjustment to younger donors or donors beyond their organizations' traditional constituencies of supporters.

How about compensation?

The realities of competitive compensation can be perplexing. Organizations that may have been proud of their lean compensation plans may experience sticker shock in the search for a successor to a long-serving CEO, especially when that CEO has been, in effect, a major donor. It's one thing for a CEO (or board) to forego market compensation, but the compression effects down the line can have lasting implications. Again, the trend is not new, but its implication in individual cases can be dramatic.

“Organizations that may have been proud of their lean compensation plans may experience sticker shock in the search for a successor to a long-serving CEO, especially when that CEO has been, in effect, a major donor.”

Is it easier or more difficult for non-profits to attract diverse candidates?

Generally speaking, the non-profit sector has long been more open to “diverse” candidates, given that so many missions exist to serve the underserved and the under-represented. Additionally, women and people of color had more opportunities for growth and responsibility in the non-profit sector than may have been routine in the for-profit sector.

How has BoardWalk Consulting fared in placing diverse candidates?

CEO searches are 80 percent of our work at BoardWalk Consulting. For many years, fully half our CEO placements have been leaders of color and over half have been women – not because clients specified such in their searches but because we worked hard to expose boards and candidates to opportunities each group may have overlooked otherwise. With the post-George Floyd corporate push for diversity officers, for example, the competition may be skewed for a time by the richer compensation on offer, but at the end of the day more opportunities for all have benefits that should outweigh momentary glitches in the leadership market. That said, we are confident that the non-profit sector will continue to be compelling for those inclined to community- and life-enhancing roles.

SPOTLIGHT

A Look Inside the Rewarding Work Serving a Non-Profit



*Created through a recent merger between DRi and Waterstone Human Capital, **DRiWaterstone Human Capital** is a culture-centric executive search, leadership advisory, and human capital firm focused on helping mission and purpose-driven organizations across the U.S. build high performance teams and cultures.*

Jennifer Dunlap is co-founder, president, and CEO of DRiWaterstone. After spending decades as a senior executive at non-profit organizations, she was convinced that the sector needed a dedicated and proven partner that could build capacity for organizations. Over the last 15 years, Ms. Dunlap has led executive searches for CEOs who have reinvented non-profit business models at blue-chip organizations such as AARP, Heifer International, League of Women Voters, NPR, and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

*Ms. Dunlap recently sat down with **Hunt Scanlon Media** to discuss how working for a non-profit can be a fulfilling career and what it takes to find senior talent in the sector.*

Jennifer, tell us a little about DRiWaterstone Human Capital and what you're seeing with clients these days.

At DRiWaterstone, we have the pleasure of helping some of the best non-profit and social impact organizations in North America find mission and purpose-driven candidates to fill leadership roles within their organization and on their boards. There is an ongoing need for high-performance talent who can help take an organization's mission, impact, and success to the next level. Many people don't know that the non-profit sector as a whole employs 10 percent of the U.S. workforce. The 1.5 million non-profits come in all shapes and sizes, from serving their local communities to serving the world. This creates competition for the best talent. As a result, many candidates have different options to consider. In order for a non-profit to get the most competitive candidates, they can't rely on applicants responding to advertising. We frequently hear, "we have been trying to do it ourselves but none of the applicants are qualified." I think this plays a large role in the non-profit sector seeking executive search help. Organizations are also using this time to review their talent strategy and plan for the future – looking at where they are today, where they want to be in the next three to five years, and doing an assessment of "do we have the right people in the right seats to achieve our plans?" Whether they're looking to develop and fill new roles, or to make changes to their current team or structure, that's something that we're able to support them with.

Is there a place in the non-profit sector for individuals looking for a new career path?

What I tell candidates who are considering making the move to the non-profit space that it feeds your soul in a way many other organizations just can't. At the end of the day, it just feels different to work in the non-profit sector because what you do really does

matter, and really does impact peoples' lives – it's not just about making money. We're in a time where there's a lot of competition for talent, no matter the sector, and as a result, organizations need to distinguish themselves as a place where top talent wants to be. For non-profits, their mission, purpose, culture, and impact are their competitive advantage. Those are things that speak to mission and purpose-driven candidates who are looking for a change. And from a candidate perspective, the non-profit space offers so much opportunity and so much growth potential. If you can write, if you're organized, if you're a relationship builder, and if you have a passion for mission, you can do just about anything in this sector. At DRiWaterstone, we've spent more than 20 years connecting mission and purpose-driven organizations with high-performance, mission and purpose-driven talent. These people are passionate about making a difference, and they have the skills and behaviors that can help organizations achieve their mission, impact, and reputation goals.

What obstacles do non-profits face in 2023?

The impact of the pandemic has been wide ranging and affected the industry significantly. But the big challenges facing the industry boil down to attracting and retaining high-performance, mission and purpose-driven talent. Compensation models have been a long-standing challenge. Non-profits need to be more aware of the different compensation models (monetary and not) they could be considering – ones that allow for rewarding performance. Likewise, funders need to recognize that talent matters, and if an organization doesn't have the top talent they need to effectively deliver on the mission, their investment won't be as impactful as it could be. Things are starting to change in this regard, with many funders becoming more attuned to the talent landscape within organizations and understanding that they need to pay for high-performing talent who can do the important work and achieve results. While compensation is important, so is having an organization that people want to work for. Do people see you as an important mission and purpose-driven organization with a good culture? Are you providing learning and growth opportunities? Building a strong employer brand (and backing it up with action) will help with retention as well as talent attraction. As will having a long-term talent acquisition and retention strategy. Non-profits are competing for great talent – having a plan not only for how you'll attract the best mission and purpose-driven candidates, but also how you'll ensure talent is engaged, retained, and supported in their career will make the difference moving forward.

Is flexibility important in this space?

Yes, candidates today have a real expectation of flexibility – around where they work, when they work, how they work, and more. There are some people who don't want to go back to an office and lose the flexibility they've found over the last few years. Most people want a hybrid environment, and organizations are trying to figure the right balance.

SPOTLIGHT

A Fresh Perspective on Recruiting for Non-profit Organizations and Associations



***Vetted Solutions** specializes in helping purpose-driven organizations in all aspects of leadership – from defining their leadership needs and requirements, to developing entire teams of loyal, dedicated high-performers, and everything in between. Jim Zaniello is president and founder*

of the Washington, D.C.-based firm which focuses on serving the leadership needs of associations, non-profit organizations, hospitality and destination marketing industries nationwide.

*Mr. Zaniello recently joined **Hunt Scanlon Media** to share his firsthand perspective on the current state of recruiting for non-profit organizations and what trends his firm is seeing in this active sector.*

Jim, how active is non-profit and association senior staff recruitment today?

Non-profit organizations and associations have always been able to attract talented executives. But activity in this sector has never been stronger than it is right now. Purpose-driven executives are realizing that non-profit or association leadership positions will allow them to make a difference in a different way than before. This now focus will naturally lead to greater results and a stronger societal impact. Whatever the leader's passion, there is an association or non-profit to match. Charitable foundations that meet basic human needs. Trade associations that advance industrial safety standards and protect the environment. Professional societies that encourage transparency and excellence in financial services and healthcare. All are possible landing sites for values-driven executives. From the organization's perspective, these visionary executives have much to offer. Leadership skills, financial expertise, marketing know-how, and process improvement expertise gained in the marketplace are just as valuable – and maybe even more needed – in the non-profit or association world.

Is there much demand for interim leaders to fill talent gaps in the non-profit sector?

Yes, a growing demand for interim leadership is fueling non-profit and association recruitment. In fact, interim positions represent roughly 20 percent of Vetted Solutions' current work in this sector. Today's interim executives do more than bridge the gap between the departure of one CEO and the hiring of the next. Their special expertise can make a lasting and positive contribution in a multitude of ways. For example, an interim CEO could be hired to rework an organization's business model or facilitate a complex merger in advance of the next CEO's arrival. Completing this work in advance builds a strong foundation from which the new hire can shape the organization's future.

Is there anything about non-profits and associations that works against long-term retention of executive hires?

I see it in exactly the opposite way. Sure, some new executive hires won't work out. But non-profits and associations have distinct

advantages that increase the likelihood of long-term leadership retention. As mentioned above, successful non-profit and association executives embrace their organizations' mission. This deep dedication increases their institutional loyalty and strengthens their desire to overcome frustrations and obstacles that drive away executives in other contexts. Even when times are tough, non-profit and association executives are so invested in the cause that their instinct is to fight, not to flee. Search committees and boards also have an important role to play in executive retention. A recruit's acceptance of an offer does not represent the end of the committee's work. Rather, it signals the beginning of what should be a carefully planned onboarding program. The goal here is two-fold. First, to educate the new leader on the organization's programs, people and processes. Second, to integrate the executive into the organization's mission, values and culture. Executive onboarding is a highly interactive exercise with regular check-ins, honest give-and-take and 360-degree communication over a period of months, if not a full year. When done right, rigorous onboarding will dramatically increase the odds of long-term retention.

How important is it for non-profits and associations to have a formal recruitment strategy? And how important is organizational branding in the recruitment process?

Both are essential. Careful non-profit and association recruiting never has been – and certainly is not now – simply a matter of posting jobs and interviewing applicants. The organization must present and promote each opportunity in a way that will attract and appeal to its preferred candidate pool. An effective non-profit and association recruiting strategy flows from core organizational values. Those values should include DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility) initiatives that will produce the broadest and best possible pool of talent. Successful organizations go beyond race, gender, sexuality and identity by embracing diversity in all its forms – from blind and low-vision employees to military veterans to workers with different backgrounds and abilities. Not because they have to, but because they know that uniqueness in all its forms improves organizational performance. Many executive candidates use diversity as a core criterion for evaluating an organization's attractiveness. These leaders know that an inclusive environment fosters organizational success. Diverse recruits take an even closer look at the organization's culture. Is it welcoming? Will they be expected to serve as a change agent or have other champions already paved the way?

Can you discuss the branding side?

As for branding, the idea is simply to tell your story as powerfully as possible through as many channels as possible. Does your website clearly present not only what you do but who you are? Are you differentiating yourself from other organizations? Do you engage employee alumni to help spread the word? Are the organization's executives recognized thought leaders in your sphere of influence? Are you a generous organization? And (cont'd. to page 12)

finally, have you prepared your interview team to tell your story? Interviewers are, after all, your frontline brand ambassadors.

With today's surge in remote hiring, are non-profits and associations hiring more international executives?

In our experience, remote hiring remains a work-in-progress in most organizations. There are so many different schools of thought about the wisdom of remote hiring, especially for senior leadership positions. When does it make sense? Should you transition from an onsite workforce model to remote-first hiring? How can you effectively integrate remote workers into the operation? With time, I expect we'll gain greater helpful knowledge on all those questions. Maybe proven models that increase the likelihood of remote-first success will emerge. But we aren't there yet. Nor has remote hiring produced a surge in international executive recruitment. A Helsinki-based executive who will live and work in Helsinki – rather than Houston – creates a host of new legal, financial, and operational challenges. What compensation and benefit structures will the other country require? What new taxing authorities does the organization now have to satisfy? Which country's law will apply in the event of a dispute? Will the international executive ever really be accepted as part of the domestic team?

Can you share a few of Vetted Solutions' recent non-profit or association placements that illustrate some of the principles you've discussed here?

Vetted Solutions recently conducted a CEO search for the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation (NFFF), an organization that honors America's fallen fire heroes, assists their families, and works to reduce firefighter deaths and injuries. The retiring CEO was an icon in the NFFF community – and clearly a difficult person to “replace.” At the same time, the organization's programmatic growth made the opportunity quite appealing to many qualified candidates. We focused on telling NFFF's inspiring story and tapped the organization's board members and staff as brand ambassadors. The NFFF search committee ultimately selected an exceptional candidate who embraced their mission, could lead change and was not afraid to follow an icon.

An assignment with the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA) presented a very different situation. In response to the unexpected departure of its highly respected CEO, we helped NAPFA quickly identify a qualified interim executive, while simultaneously launching the search for a permanent replacement. Our talent pool included both association professionals and corporate executives with deep financial and investment experience. Ultimately, the search committee settled on an experienced association executive who had personally benefitted from fee-only financial planning – a perfect combination.

Last, we have just begun a search for the Institute for Technology in Health Care, an organization that provides grants to support innovative technologies designed to address major health care problems. Rather than new staff leadership, the institute is seeking an executive board member who can serve as a brand ambassador, boost the organization's visibility and contribute to board governance.

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7 Key Trends Impacting Non-Profits

Having arrived at the halfway point of the year, the non-profit and social impact practice at **Koya Partners | Diversified Search Group**, recently pulled together some key trends they have been seeing. In a new report, managing directors Michelle Bonoan and Marissa Delgado and managing associate Tiara Muse identified seven key themes:

1. Continued Focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Access

"The focus on DEI continues, with a strong push to hire leaders of color and build equitable, inclusive cultures," said the report. "Candidates are prioritizing organizations and sectors that have advanced on their DEI journey and are looking critically at those that have not. Our practice has noted an increased awareness of accessibility as a key concern when it comes to DEI, and has seen a movement toward focusing on ensuring that non-profits are creating inclusive and accessible environments. This includes everything from building accessible web sites to being a welcoming, inclusive workplace for team members with a wide range of disabilities."

2. Pay Transparency

Seventeen states and counting have passed laws around pay transparency. This is a trend that seems to be here to stay. "These laws, which are aimed at closing the racial and gender pay gaps, typically require job postings to explicitly list a salary range and

"While it would have been rare several years ago, it's now not unusual to see more than one internal candidate express interest in a leadership role."

may also prohibit potential employers from asking candidates to provide a salary history," said Koya Partners | Diversified Search Group. "Organizations that are not prepared to follow these emerging guidelines may find themselves falling behind when it comes to hiring. Candidates are increasingly demanding salary transparency early in the process, and might just move on from a potential organization that does not offer up this information. Koya Partners | Diversified Search Group's policy is to post a good faith salary on any job description posted on our website, and we are prepared to help clients work through this process and its implications."

3. Longtime Leaders and Founders Stepping Down

"We have seen a significant increase in long-term executive directors, presidents and CEOs stepping down," said the report. "As we move away from the COVID era, leaders who may have otherwise retired in 2020-2021 have begun to do so en masse. We are also hearing from CEOs and executive directors who are simply exhausted or burned out from the stress and pressure of leading through the pandemic. Many of these leaders are considering career changes that take them out of CEO role (cont'd. to page 14)

and allow them to focus on being individual contributors or pursuing consulting work.”

4. Increase in Internal Candidates

The firm’s non-profit and social impact practice says it has observed an increase in the number of internal candidates in its engagements. “While it would have been rare several years ago, it’s now not unusual to see more than one internal candidate express interest in a leadership role,” said the report. “The high number of founder and long-term leader transitions noted above have created opportunities internally for many rising leaders who have a deep personal connection to the missions and organizations they serve but may have felt stagnant in their career growth because of flat organizational structures or a lack of opportunity to advance.”

5. Changing Boards

Many boards of directors look and operate much differently than they did before 2020. “We’ve seen an increase in board members who have full-time jobs in addition to board service, which often means they have less free time than some of their retired predecessors,” said Koya Partners | Diversified Search Group. “This has led to a decrease in board engagement in many of our searches, as it is difficult to get a busy board engaged in a comprehensive search process. We have worked to adjust our processes to reflect this new reality, while also ensuring that boards understand that a comprehensive, effective, and rigorous process requires time and commitment.”

6. Remote Work

It’s clear that some version of remote work is also here to stay. For the most part, the candidates the search firm engages with are not interested in relocating, much less commuting to an office five days a week. “Organizational leaders are continuing to struggle with how to build culture and promote collaboration in a mostly virtual environment,” said the report. “This specific leadership challenge is becoming more and more of a core competency that emerging leaders will need to demonstrate in order to be competitive candidates.”

7. Longer Transitions

“We have seen average transition times between jobs grow to six or more weeks, especially at the top level,” said the report. “Leaders moving from one organization to another are taking great care to ensure that they leave on a good note and also give themselves enough time to decompress and be ready for their next chapter. It’s important that search committees and hiring managers take this longer transition time into account when setting timeline expectations.”

Diversified Search Group is a family of firms serving specialized sectors. The firm was founded almost five decades ago for the express purpose of placing diverse candidates in client organizations. Koya Partners is a part of the Diversified Search Group and is dedicated to mission-driven leadership. Koya works broadly at the senior-most levels of the mission-driven field in philanthropy, social services, arts and culture, and social justice, among others.



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Top Non-Profit Searches Making News...

Diversified Search Group | Koya Partners Selected to Find New Leader for TransitCenter



Koya Partners, a part of **Diversified Search Group**, was recently retained by TransitCenter in New York City to lead its search for a new executive director. Managing director Anne McCarthy, senior search associate Claire Hunt, and senior search coordinator Kaley Blaszkowski are leading the assignment. The executive director must be a strategic and visionary leader with a solid understanding of the strategies needed to advance the work of a mission-driven philanthropic organization. This individual will naturally inspire the staff, board, and partners to see how effective philanthropy can improve the sector and propel the organization forward, Koya notes. With the combination of revenues and resources, Diversified Search and Koya now represent one of the largest non-profit and higher education practices in the executive search industry.

The Moran Company Seeks CEO for Feeding Pennsylvania

The Moran Company, an executive recruitment firm that specializes in the non-profit sector, has been enlisted to find the next chief executive officer for Feeding Pennsylvania (FPA), the statewide association of nine Feeding



America affiliated food banks. Senior search consultant Mike English is leading the assignment. The non-profit's former leader, Jane Clements, stepped down this spring to become vice president, state government affairs for Commonwealth Strategic Partners' Harrisburg, PA, operations. Founded in 2011, Feeding Pennsylvania works to promote and aid member food banks in securing food and other resources to reduce hunger and food insecurity across the state and to provide a shared voice on the issues of hunger and food access within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Peña Search Seeks VP of HR for The Meadows Foundation



Peña Search has been retained by The Meadows Foundation to lead its search for a VP of HR. Travis Hillier and Cindy Maloney are leading the search. The ideal candidate will have a track record of handling complex

situations and multiple responsibilities simultaneously, balancing short-and-long-term planning and projects with the urgency of immediate demands. They should demonstrate the ability to be proactive and mitigate risk for the organization while supporting the president and CEO in creating an engaging and values-based environment that supports the foundation's mission for current and future staff. Established in 1948 by Algor H. and Virginia Garrison Stuart Meadows, The Meadows Foundation is a private family foundation on a mission to improve the quality and circumstances of life for the people of Texas.

...More Non-Profit Searches

ZRG Partners Places CEO of Catalina Island Conservancy



ZRG Partners has placed Whitney Latorre as president and CEO of the Catalina Island Conservancy in California. The search was led by managing director Diane Charness, partnering with Christina Sampaio-Forman, vice president, executive search of Sucherman, a ZRG company. Ms. Latorre's appointment culminates an extensive search for a new leader of the non-profit organization, which is dedicated to the responsible stewardship of Santa Catalina Island through conservation, education, and recreation. "With a passion for telling stories that matter, Latorre brings unique experience as an internationally recognized storyteller and educator, and as a dynamic innovator and leader to Catalina Island Conservancy," said the non-profit. She joins the organization from National Geographic, part of The Walt Disney Company, where she was vice president and executive director of visuals.

WittKieffer Seeks CEO for March of Dimes

Oak Brook-IL-based **WittKieffer** recruited Elizabeth Cherot as the new president and chief executive officer of non-profit March of Dimes, which supports the health of mothers and babies. The search was led by consultants Jim King, Donna Padilla, Christine Pendleton, and John Fazekas. As March of Dimes' first physician leader, Dr. Cherot is responsible for the development and implementation of a strategic vision to address the country's maternal and infant health crisis, while increasing awareness and engagement in its work among key stakeholders. "Today, too many babies are born too sick and too soon and too many moms are facing health risks and death that we know are largely preventable," said Sharon Mills Higgins, national board of trustees chair.



Bryant Group Seeks Vice Chancellor for Advancement for University of Washington Tacoma



Dallas-based executive search and talent development firm **Bryant Group** has been selected to help recruit the next vice chancellor for advancement for the University of Washington Tacoma (UW Tacoma). Sarah Hempen, vice president, and Heather Wilensky, senior recruiter, are leading the assignment. The University of Washington Tacoma's next vice chancellor for advancement will be responsible for oversight and implementation of all advancement activities on the UW Tacoma campus including marketing and communications, major gifts, and advancement services, said the Bryant Group. This leader will report jointly to the chancellor of UW Tacoma, Sheila Edwards Lange, and the UW vice president for development, Tamara Josserand, and will be an integral member of the chancellor's executive leadership team.

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