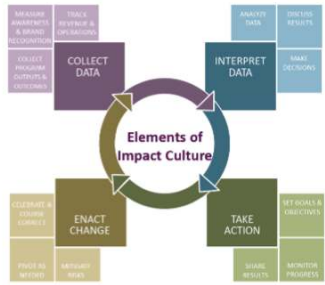


Organizational Checklist for an Impact Culture

Impact Culture: Impact is the bottom line of the social sector. A social sector organization with an impact culture is energized by data, curious to learn, takes deliberate action and embraces change.



INSTRUCTIONS: Based on where you are in the [nonprofit lifecycle](#), walk through each checklist item and ask yourself or your management team to gauge how embedded these elements are in your culture. Level 1 loosely correlates with the start-up phase; Level 2, the growth phase; and Level 3, the maturity phase.

Score on your own or score with your team as a fun self-assessment. If you do it as a group, have everyone rate it by giving a thumbs up (good), thumbs down (not good) or thumbs to the side (neutral). Then, develop a short Action Plan to address any deficits or use as a guide for Strategic Planning.

Level 01 Organization Understands and Appreciates Why Impact Is Important

- Board and staff can recite what the organization is trying to achieve and why it is important to the community/greater good
- Everyone truly believes that measuring impact will lead to being a [high-impact, high-performance](#) organization – which ultimately means making a bigger difference for those you serve
- Everyone appreciates that [change](#) is difficult and embraces impact management as an opportunity to demonstrate progress and continuous improvement
- Staff track their impact (e.g., IT, HR, finance, & development) through outputs and outcomes
- Program and development staff are on the same team and aligned on program outcomes to be measured
- Staff understand their role in impact management and have performance measures directly connected to the organization’s strategy and impact
- [Board tracks](#) its own impact (e.g., funds raised, attendance) to improve engagement and ensure accountability
- Board and staff regularly share results openly, celebrate success and [discuss course corrections](#)

Level 02 Organization Proactively Designs & Measures Programs/Operations Using Best Practices

- All Level 1 items firmly embedded in culture
- Staff use a sophisticated program design model, such as [Lean Startup](#)
- Staff regularly track best practices nationally and embed them into their activities
- Data is collected, stored properly, and analyzed on schedule, as planned
- Staff feel empowered to question why data is being collected, especially if it is not used
- Staff have systems and tools to help them collect and interpret real-time data and make changes as needed
- [Stories](#) are utilized to illustrate success and bring data to life
- [Staff possess necessary skills](#) and are encouraged to critically assess all aspects of their work
- Staff do not want to move forward on major decisions without data and careful reflection
- Staff are rewarded for embracing impact management

Level 03 Organization Champions Impact Management to Grow & Improve

- All Level 1 and 2 items firmly embedded in culture
- Organization shares information freely, internally and externally, and “cross-pollinates” as much as possible
- Improvements are made based on data collected and analyzed
- Organization is benchmarking its data against best practices
- Staff receives feedback on how ideas and improvements have led to positive change
- Organization is a learning organization where staff are encouraged to be curious and invest in their professional development
- Organization appropriately charges donors/funders for impact management and audits as a direct cost of doing business
- Organization is using cost-benefit analysis and [social return on investment](#) in its donor/investor conversations
- Board and staff have richer and more [informed conversations](#)
- Donors better understand the big picture through data and stories
- Organization takes calculated risks and worries more about moving the needle than fear of [failure](#)
- Funders are taking notice