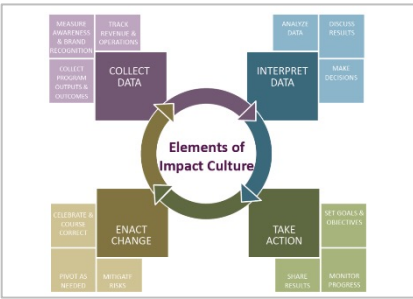


# Organizational Checklist for an Impact-Driven Culture

**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 readily tell stories about 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](#), and carefully assess any new opportunities using an [opportunity assessment](#).
- 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, analyzed and shared candidly with partners, funders and the community as lessons learned.
- Organization is benchmarking its data against best practices and making adjustments based on the latest science.
- Organization is using paired measures (both qualitative and quantitative) when measuring change.
- Staff receive 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 and inviting organization to serve on panels to discuss issue area and future trends.