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FC Expert Blog

Making Your List of Top Ten Nonprofits

BY FC EXPERT BLOGGER ALICE KORNGOLD Fri Feb 13, 2009

This blog is written by a member of our expert blogging community and expresses that expert's views alone.

Out of the 1.2 million nonprofits nationally, how would you choose your Top Ten? Are you looking for the most high-impact, sustainable, or innovative? Which issues are most important to you – the environment, education, poverty, healthcare, social justice, or the arts? Would you choose the Top Ten from your community, the nation, or the world?

These are important questions for businesses and individuals who want to make financial contributions and for people who want to volunteer their time. And as my readers know, the volunteer time I encourage smart entrepreneurs to invest in is nonprofit board time – helping nonprofits to envision their greater potential and then helping to create and achieve robust organizational revenue models for success.

You'll see many of my favorite organizations by reading my posts, and you'll see why they're my favorites. They range from small regional nonprofits to national and global, including: [Row New York](#) (where I serve on the board), [East River Development Alliance](#), [Root Capital](#), [EngenderHealth](#), [Groundwork](#), [Providence House](#), [Atlas Performing Arts Center](#), the [Periwinkle Foundation](#), [Center for Community Change](#), and one to stay tuned for – the [Equal Justice Initiative](#).

Choosing your Top Ten nonprofits is very personal. Consider these points as you decide:

1. What the organization does – the mission and work has to be personally meaningful to you
2. The programs – they need to demonstrate their effectiveness in solving the problem
3. Caliber of the CEO – the CEO must be an expert and a highly effective leader
4. Caliber of the board – and especially the board chair/president – for an organization to do its best, the board should be engaged and supportive – and the board should include people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives
5. Budget – most nonprofit revenues are stressed right now; the question is whether there is core funding from a solid base, and whether there is active CEO and board involvement in building viable, new revenue opportunities – through philanthropy, or fees for services, or government sources. Even if that's not the case, perhaps you can help if you are passionate about the mission. Just be aware of how challenging the situation is.
6. Where you can add [value](#)

When choosing your top nonprofits, it's good to use your business sense, but be sure to follow your heart. There is important work to be done and your passion will drive you.

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